MURSHID QULĪ KHĀN AND HIS TIMES

THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE Ph.D. DEGREE

OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

BY

ABDUL KARIM

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

1962

ProQuest Number: 11015917

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS
The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript
and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed,
a note will indicate the deletion.

ProQuest 11015917

Published by ProQuest LLC (2018). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.
This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

Abstract

Chapter I defines the scope and importance of the work, evaluates the existing works on the subject, and describes the sources utilised.

Chapter II deals with the career of Murshid Qulī Khān, setting it in perspective of Mughal imperial politics. The chronological mistakes of former writers have been corrected. Murshid Qulī Khān's position under the Emperors Bahādur Shāh and Farrukh Siyar, confused by previous writers, has been discussed and clarified.

Chapter III deals with the provincial administration under Murshid Qulī Khān. His influence over the provincial administration and provincial officers has been brought to light. This aspect had been neglected by previous scholars. Murshid Qulī Khān's revenue reforms have been discussed in the light of non-Persian sources, which earlier writers had neglected. An attempt has been made to explain some obscure points like the basis of settlement and the rates of revenues.

Chapter IV deals with Murshid Qulī Khān's relations with the European companies, and corrects misunderstandings and misinterpretations by previous

scholars, such as Charles Stewart, C.R. Wilson and Miss Anjali Sen. In particular the thesis that Murshid Qulī Khān harassed the English traders for his own gain, has been refuted. In Section V, Murshid Qulī Khān's relations with other European traders have been discussed, though only in outline.

Chapter V in its two sections, deals with the effect of Murshid Qulī Khān's rule on the trade, commerce and economic conditions of Bengal and on the social life of the province. The economy of Bengal has been studied by S. Bhattacharya in his East India Company and the Economy of Bengal 1704-1740, to whom the present writer is greatly indebted, but in the present study an attempt has been made both to identify the role of Murshid Qulī Khān and to examine more closely the part played by the local people in the expanding trade and commerce of the country, and to show what benefits they derived from the expansion. The second section deals with other aspects of the society during Murshid Qulī Khān's time. Such points as the composition of the society, education and Hindu-Muslim relations have been discussed.

The Conclusion provides a brief review of the main themes of the thesis.

Note on Transliteration

The following system has been used: –

(i) For Persian letters: –

ا = a	ر = r	ف = f
ب = b	ز = z	ق = q
پ = p	ژ = zh	ک = k
ت = t	س = s	گ = g
ث = th	ش = sh	ل = l
ج = j	ص = ṣ	م = m
چ = ch	ض = ḍ	ن = n
ح = ḥ	ط = ṭ	و = w
خ = kh	ظ = ẓ	ه = h
د = d	ع = ʻ	ء = ʼ
ذ = dh	غ = gh	ی = i

Diphthong = au, aj

Short vowels = a, i, u Long vowels = ā, ī, ū

(ii) For Bengali letters: –

অ = a	ও = o	জ = j	থ = th	য = y	ং = ṁ
আ = ā	ঔ = au	ঝ = jh	দ = d	র = r	ঃ = ḥ
ই = i	ক = k	ঞ = ñ	ধ = dh	ল = l	ঁ = n
ঈ = ī	খ = kh	ট = ṭ	ন = n	ব = v	
উ = u	গ = g	ঠ = ṭh	প = p	শ = ś	
ঊ = ū	ঘ = gh	ড = ḍ	ফ = ph	ষ = sh	
ঋ = ṛi	ঙ = ṅ	ঢ = ḍh	ব = b	স = s	
এ = e	চ = ch	ণ = ṇ	ভ = bh	হ = h	
ঐ = ai	ছ = chh	ত = t	ম = m	ড় = ṛ	
				য় = y	

Abbreviations

Aḥkām = Aḥkām-i-ʿĀlamgīrī of ʿInāyat Allāh, I.O. Ms. No. 3887

Akhbārāt = Akhbārāt-i-Darbār-i-Muʿalla, Jaipur records, Royal Asiatic Society collection

B. C. G. = Bhārat Chandra Granthāvalī, edited by B.N. Bandopādhyāy & S.K. Dās, Calcutta, 1357 B.S.

B. M. = British Museum

Consultations = The Diary and Consultations of the English Council in Calcutta, I.O. records catalogued as Bengal Public Consultations.

Fifth Report = The Fifth Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of the East India Company, 1812, edited by W.K. Firminger, Calcutta, 1917

H. B. II = History of Bengal, Vol. II, Dacca University, 1948

I. O. = India Office, now Commonwealth Relations Office, London

Riād = Riād al-Salāṭīn of Ghulām Ḥusain Salīm, Bibliotheca Indica, 1898

Siyar = Siyar al-Mutākhkherīn of Sayyid Ghulām Ḥusain Ṭabaṭābī, translated by Haji Mustapha, Calcutta, 1926

T. B. = Tawārīkh-i-Bangālah of Salīm Allāh, I.O. Ms. No. 2995, Ethe No. 478

Wilson = The Early Annals of the English in Bengal 1704-1722, by C.R. Wilson in 3 volumes, Calcutta, 1895-1917

Table of Contents

		Page
Abstract		2
The System of Transliteration		4
Abbreviation		5
Table of Contents		7
Chapter I	Introduction	8
Chapter II	Murshid Quli Khān's Career	30
Chapter III	Administration under Murshid Quli Khān	100
Chapter IV	The European Companies in Bengal	164
	Section I Murshid Quli Khān's Relations with the English, 1700-1707	164
	" II The Position of the English during the absence of Murshid Quli Khān, 1708-1709	198
	" III The Receipt of an Imperial Farmān by the English, 1710-1717	225
	" IV The Working of Farrukh Siyar's Farmān, 1717-1727	260
	" V Other European Companies	300
Chapter V	Effects of Murshid Quli Khān's Rule upon Economic and Social Conditions	328
	Section I Economic Conditions	328
	" II Social Conditions	367
Conclusion		390
A Map of Bengal		399
Bibliography		400

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Bengal at the turn of the Century

Mughal authority was established in Bengal towards the beginning of the 17th century in the reign of Jahāngīr (1605-27). Thereafter the province was ruled by a series of strong governors, often royal princes or important nobles. The province thus remained in peace for about a century, with only the occasional ravages of the Magh and Firingi pirates in the coastal regions, which, however, did not pose any serious problem to the strong government of the Mughals. But towards the end of the 17th century, the Mughal power began to decline. Though the Emperor Aurangzīb was able to carry his sceptre throughout the whole of India including the far south, his protracted Maratha warfare sapped the vitality of the Mughal empire, and withdrew his supervision from the northern parts of his empire. Taking advantage of the supine rule of Ibrāhīm Khān (1689-97), sūbahdār of Bengal and Orissa, Subhā Singh, a zamīndār of Chandrakona in Midnapur district, combined with Raḥīm Khān, an Afghān leader in Orissa, and broke the standard of rebellion in 1696. They took possession of a huge tract of land in the south-western region of Bengal.[1]

---

1. T.B., f. 4b ; Riād, p. 224. Chandakona was formerly in Burdwan but is now in Midnapur district.

The rebellion of Subhā Singh and Raḥīm Khān had far-reaching results. The direct results were the appointment of a royal prince to the sūbahdārī of Bengal and the fortification of the European settlements at Calcutta, Chinsura and Chandarnagar. Ibrāhīm Khān underrated the power of the rebels and did not take any strong measure against them, fondly expecting that the rebels would disperse themselves when gorged with plunder. The European traders became afraid of lawlessness in the country and of possible plundering of their goods and effects. They applied to the sūbahdār at Dacca requesting his permission to fortify their factories. Ibrāhīm Khān ordered them in general terms to defend themselves. Taking advantage of this order, the European companies fortified their factories and thus were established Fort William in Calcutta, Fort Gustavus in Chinsura and Fort Orleans in Chandarnagar.[1]

1740

The rebellion of Subhā Singh and Raḥīm Khān demonstrates the weakness of the Mughal government in Bengal. Not only did the sūbahdār remain inactive, but the faujdārs immediately responsible for the suppression of the rebellion showed extreme cowardice. The rebellion at the same time proved the superiority of the armed strength of the European

---

1. Wilson, I, p. 147

traders. In fact, the progress of the rebellion to the east of the Ganges was checked by the Dutch arms at Chinsura.[1] The fortified posts of the Europeans afforded shelter to many people and government servants who were dispossessed of their positions by the rebels.

The Emperor Aurangzīb was much incensed at the news of the rebellion and of the inactivity of the sūbahdār. He removed the indolent sūbahdār from Bengal. Appointing his grandson Prince Muḥammad ʿAẓīm al-Dīn (son of Sulṭān Muʿaẓẓam, later Emperor Shāh ʿĀlam Bahādur Shāh) to the sūbahdārī of Bengal, the emperor ordered Zabardast Khān, son of Ibrāhīm Khān, to take the field against the rebels pending the arrival of the prince. The new sūbahdār reached Burdwan in November 1698. The rebels had already been put to flight by Zabardast Khān and now the prince crushed them without any difficulty. But once the rebels were suppressed, the prince gave himself to pleasure, proving both lazy and covetous. In July, 1698 the English received from the prince a letter patent, on payment of Rs. 16,000, allowing them to purchase from the owners the right of renting the three villages of Calcutta, Sutanuti and Govindpur.[2] The establishment of the Fort William and the

---

1. T.B., f.5
2. Wilson: Old Fort William in Bengal, vol. I, p. 39.

right of renting the villages, which the Calcutta Council always called the zamīndārī right gave the English a secure foothold in Bengal. From the position of mere traders, the English became partners in the administration and co-sharer of rights and privileges with other Mughal subjects. The English, during the last half of the 18th century were to take full advantage of the position thus achieved by the favour of the prince.

Apart from realising money from the foreign traders by granting privileges, the prince also indulged in private trade through his agents. He monopolised the trade by purchasing merchandise at the place of origin or at the port of embarkation and then selling it to the merchants at a high price. This was called the saudā-i-khās or private trade of His Excellency.[1] Such private trade had been in practice since the time of Shāh Shujā' and Mīr Jumlah and Shāistah Khān had indulged in it.[2] Naturally, as a result of this policy, the people suffered and Aurangzīb now chastised the prince for the evil practice. The emperor not only threatened him by letter but also reduced his rank by one thousand.[3] The appointment of a royal prince to the sūbahdārī itself suggests that the emperor wanted to strengthen the executive administration of the province.

---

1. T.B., f. 24b; Riād, p. 244.
2. M.B., II, p. 402.
3. Ibid., p. 403.

His next act, the appointment of an efficient civil servant as the diwān of the province, suggests that he also felt the need to tighten up the financial administration — and by so doing to both check and strengthen the prince and his administration. The officer chosen for the task was Murshid Qulī Khān, whose life and times are to be discussed in the following pages.

Scope of the Work

Muḥammad Hādī, successively entitled Kārṭalab Khān, Murshid Qulī Khān, Ja'far Khān and finally Mu'tamin al-Mulk Alā' al-Daulāh Ja'far Khān Nāṣirī Nāṣir Jang Bahādur, was to be the dominating factor in Bengal's politics throughout the first quarter of the 18th century, except for one interval of two years (i.e. 1708 and 1709). It is true that initially Murshid Qulī Khān was only the diwān, subordinate in rank to the ṣūbahdār, Prince Muḥammad Aẓīm al-Dīn. But he was so much favoured by the emperor due to his efficient management of affairs that the ṣūbahdār was driven to leave Bengal within a short time and to administer the province in absentia. Murshid Qulī Khān became the full-fledged ṣūbahdār of Bengal in 1715-16 (in Orissa from 1704-07 and again from 1713 to his death).[1] But throughout the period of his office in Bengal, he was the highest officer present on the spot and thus the administration largely centred

---

1. See infra, Chapter II, pp. 90-92

round him.

Several factors add interest to the study of Murshid Qulī Khān's period in Bengal history. In the first place, Murshid Qulī Khān's administration stands between the most glorious period of the Mughal rule and the years of its disintegration. He witnessed the life and death of the last great Mughal Emperor Aurangzīb, two wars of succession for the imperial throne, and the palace revolutions organised by powerful ministers, in a word, the process of disintegration of the Mughal empire. He began his career at a time when the centre strictly controlled the provincial officers, but survived to see that strict control slacken bit by bit. He was himself the last great officer in Bengal appointed direct from the centre. After his death, the succession of hereditary sūbahdārs in Bengal began and all his successors were confirmed by the central government only after they had established their position by the sword.

Secondly, the period gave rise to some forces which were later to play an important part in the politics and economy of the country. The foreign companies fortified their position just before the appointment of Murshid Qulī Khān to the dīwānī of the eastern provinces. The English obtained the right of renting the three villages of Calcutta, Sutanuti and Govindpur also before his time. The foreign companies received further privileges of trade from the

emperor or provincial officers during the early 18th century. But the most important privileges were obtained by the English from Emperor Farrukh Siyar in 1717. The emperor not only granted the English their trade privileges but also confirmed the right of renting the Calcutta villages and allowed them to rent more villages round about Calcutta as also to strike coins in the royal mint under certain conditions.[1] As a result, the Companies not only controlled the economy of the country by their trade, but the English in particular, gained a political hold over their villages. From their fortified settlements in Calcutta, the English became the master of the country only thirty years after the death of Murshid Qulī Khān. Murshid Qulī Khān's administration also witnessed the rise of the great Marwari banking family of Jagat Seṭh. It is said that the House of Jagat Seṭh was instrumental in procuring from the Imperial court their confirmation in the sūbahdārī for both Shujā' al-Dīn Muḥammad Khān (1727-39) and Allāhwardī Khān (1740-56).[2] (Jagat Seṭh, of course, played an important part in the revolution of 1757 when Sirāj al-Daulāh was defeated by the English).

The transfer of the capital from Dacca to Murshidabad (then Makhsūsābād) was yet another landmark in

---

1. See infra, Chapter IV, Section IV, p.266
2. Bengal : Past and Present, Vol. XX, p. 149, Modern popular spelling is Alivardi Khan.

Bengal history. The process began when Murshid Qulī Khān transferred the dīwānī offices from Dacca to Murshidabad, for with the removal of the sūbahdār's residence from Dacca to Patna in 1703[1] the centre of gravity in Bengal shifted to Murshidabad, initially the dīwān's residence and later on that of the sūbahdār himself. From this new headquarters the government was in a position to keep a direct watch over the growing power of the European companies, other merchants and banias. It was this centre, which rose to the position of eminence during the time of Murshid Qulī Khān and his successors, which was eventually to witness the loss of independence of the country and the establishment of the English supremacy.

Murshid Qulī Khān's administration, therefore, witnessed the rise of those forces in Bengal that a few years later moulded the fate of the country and thus forms an important chapter in Bengal's history. It is this which makes it necessary to analyse and set in proper perspective the life and times of Murshid Qulī Khān, his attitude to the declining Mughal power, his management of Bengal affairs, his reaction to the rising power of the European companies, especially the English, and to the rise of the banking family of Jagat Seṭh, and lastly, his role in the social and

---

1. See infra, Chapter II, p.41

economic life of the people under his jurisdiction.

Evaluation of the existing works

Murshid Qulī Khān has not received as much attention from modern scholars as he deserves. Charles Stewart who was the first to attempt a comprehensive history of Muslim Bengal devotes a chapter to Murshid Qulī Khān.[1] But he was handicapped by a lack of materials and based his work mainly on Gladwin's translation of the Tawārīkh-i-Bangālah of Salīm Allāh and the Riād al-Salātīn of Ghulām Ḥusain Salīm. The treatment of Stewart, therefore, suffers from the same defects as his sources. For example, the chronology of Murshid Qulī Khān's career remains defective because it is defective in Salīm Allāh. The administration and the revenue reforms of Murshid Qulī Khān likewise remain as vague in Stewart as in Salīm Allāh. Stewart probably had no access to the records of the European companies, even to most of the records of the English. He could say very little about Murshid Qulī Khān's relation with the traders. The socio-economic condition of the country did not receive his attention either because the sources that have lately been discovered were not available to him or from lack of interest. J.C. Marshman's Outline of the history of Bengal devotes about ten pages to

---

1. Charles Stewart : History of Bengal, pp. 351 - 414

Murshid Qulī Khān. But as in Stewart, Marshman's account is also based on Salīm Allāh and Salīm. In chronology, Marshman follows Stewart, a defective guide. As in Stewart, Marshman also states that Murshid Qulī Khān was the sūbahdār of the three provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, whereas, as will be seen later, Murshid Qulī Khān had no connection with Bihar after the death of Aurangzīb. When Marshman writes about the revenue reforms of Murshid Qulī Khān he does so merely on the basis of James Grant's Analysis of the Finances of Bengal. The works of Stewart and Marshman, therefore, are hardly better than Salīm Allāh's Tawārīkh-i-Bangālah and Salīm's Riād al-Salāṭīn. The latest attempt is that of Jadunath Sarkar who first wrote an article on Murshid Qulī Khān[1] which he later incorporated in the History of Bengal, Vol.II, edited by him.[2] The learned scholar relied mainly on the Persian sources. He has admirably cleared the chronological problem, except for the date of Murshid Qulī Khān's appointment to the sūbahdārī of Bengal, but has failed to judge correctly Murshid Qulī Khān's relation with Aẓīm al-Shān after the death of Aurangzīb as also the position of the latter in the reign of Shāh Ālam Bahādur Shāh. Moreover, Sarkar did not properly examine such aspects of Murshid Qulī Khān's

---

1. Bengal : Past and Present, Vol. LXVI, pp. 1-10
2. Published by the Dacca University, 1948

administration as the concentration of power in his hands, his relation with Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān, Kinkar Sen, and Darpa Nārāyan Qānūngo. His study of Murshid Qulī Khān's revenue reforms, based only on Persian sources, is also unsatisfactory while he did not pay sufficient attention to Murshid Qulī Khān's relation with the European companies. Social and economic matters were outside the scope of his History of Bengal. The early annals of the English in Bengal have been studied by John Bruce and C.R. Wilson.[1] Bruce's is a general history of the English East India Company down to the year 1707-08, while Wilson's is a history of the Company in Bengal from 1704 to 1722, based mainly on the Diary and Consultations of the English Council in Calcutta, so that the chief importance of Wilson's book lies in the extracts quoted or summarised from the Diary and Consultations. Bruce's exposition of the Company's position in Bengal is satisfactory, though Murshid Qulī Khān's attitude to the Company has not been clearly explained. Wilson could not complete his study before his death; he was able to write introductions to only the first two volumes ending in 1717. His study of Murshid Qulī Khān's relation with the English, however, suffers from two defects. Firstly, a correct chronology was not

1. Bruce: Annals of the Honourable East India Company from the establishment by the charter of Queen Elizabeth, 1600, to the union of the London and English East India Companies, 1707-08, in 3 Vols. Wilson: The Early Annals of the English in Bengal, in 3 vols.

available to him: for example, Wilson blamed Murshid Qulī Khān for events of 1708-09, though the latter was out of Bengal during those two years. Secondly, Wilson based his study on the summaries of the Consultations made for him by Miss Stievenard.[1] As a result, he sometimes failed to appreciate the spirit of the Consultations and thus misjudged Murshid Qulī Khān in the latter's dealings with the English. This is to be noticed mainly in his first volume covering the period 1704-10. A fresh study of Murshid Qulī Khān's relation with the European companies has since been made by Miss Anjali Sen.[2] Though she refers to the original records of the English Company in Bengal preserved in the India Office Library, it seems that she had no access to the records themselves, but based her study on the summaries of Wilson. Thus Miss Sen also fails to make any substantial progress. On the economic history of the East India Company in Bengal during the first half of the 18th century, S. Bhattacharya's work[3] is a valuable contribution.

Brief account of the sources utilised

The sources that helped in this reconstruction of Murshid Qulī Khān's history may be broadly divided

---

1. Wilson I, Preface.
2. Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol. XXXV, March, 1959, pp. 16-41
3. S. Bhattacharya : East India Company and the Economy of Bengal.

under the following heads: -

(a) The Persian sources,

(b) The records of the European companies and the writings of European travellers and writers,

(c) Bengali literature.

The Persian chronicles throwing light on the subject fall into two categories -- those written outside Bengal and those written in Bengal. Among those of the first category are the many chronicles written on the lives of the Mughal emperors from Aurangzīb to Muḥammad Shāh, under all of whom Murshid Qulī Khān served. It is needless to describe them all here. Those found useful for the present study were the Māʾthir-i-ʿĀlamgīrī of Sāqī Mustaʿd Khān,[1] the Bahādurshāhnāmah of Niʿmat Khān,[2] Tārīkh-i-Irādat Khān of Irādat Khān Mubārak Allāh,[3] ʿIbratnāmah of Mirzā Muḥammad,[4] and Tārīkh-i-Salāṭīn-i-Chaghtāi of Kāmwar Khān.[5] They supply very little information directly on the life of Murshid Qulī Khān, but there are a few statements that help in determining the chronology of his career. The same observation applies to the

---

1. Bibliotheca Indica, 1871.
2. I.O. Ms. No. 1942.
3. I.O. Ms. No. 3925.
4. I.O. Ms. No. 50.
5. I.O. Ms. No. 3151.

general history, the Muntakhab al-Lubāb of Khāfī Khān.[1] But all works of this category give a picture of the events in the imperial court and thus help in evaluating the position of Murshid Qulī Khān vis-a-vis the central government. The biographical work Ma'thir al-Umarā[2] needs, however, special mention, because it contains biographical sketches of Murshid Qulī Khān and other nobles connected with Bengal. It is also the only source for the early life of Murshid Qulī Khān. The Siyar al-Mutākhkherīn of Sayyid Ghulām Ḥusain Ṭabaṭābī,[3] completed in Patna in 1782, is a general history of the Mughals from Aurangzīb's death, and particularly of Bengal from the sūbahdārī of Shujā' al-Dīn Muḥammad Khān (1727-39). The author missed out Murshid Qulī Khān's administration, but in discussing the rule of Shujā' al-Dīn Muḥammad Khān and Allāhwardī Khān (1740-56), he makes casual reference to Murshid Qulī Khān. However, his occasional references to the state of education and society throw welcome light on the subject.

Of the Persian chronicles written in Bengal, the Tawārīkh-i-Bangālah of Salīm Allāh[4] is the most valuable. Written in 1763 at the order of Tahawwar Jang (Henry Vansittart, governor of Bengal from 1760-64), it deals

---

1. Bibliotheca Indica, 1869-1925.
2. Bibliotheca Indica, 1888-91.
3. Newal Kishore, Lucknow, 1897.
4. I.O. Ms. No. 2995.

with the history of Bengal from the sūbahdārī of Ibrāhīm Khān (1689-97) to the death of Allāhwardī Khān (1756). It is the earliest of the histories dealing with the whole career of Murshid Qulī Khān. But the evidence of this book has to be accepted with caution. Written 36 years later than the death of Murshid Qulī Khān, there is nothing to show that the author had access to any official record of Murshid Qulī Khān's time. A perusal of the book gives an impression that the author wrote either from his own memory or from traditional accounts of Murshid Qulī Khān that were still current in his time. Not a single date has been mentioned in Murshid Qulī Khān's career and the arrangement of events suffers from defective chronology. Most of the events that took place in the reign of Bahādur Shāh or Farrukh Siyar (as may be determinad by the help of English records) have been included in the reign of Aurangzīb. Similarly, the author fails to give details of many of the events for whioh much more evidence is available in the English records. In discussing Murshid Qulī Khān's relations with the English, the author describes Job Charnock's fight with the Bengal government, which had happened some ten years before Murshid Qulī Khān's first arrival in Bengal. From this example and other events of the time of Bahādur Shāh and Farrukh Siyar that the author places in the reign

of Aurangzīb, it appears that he was in great confusion about the events of Murshid Qulī Khān's time. The author paints Murshid Qulī Khān as extremely religious minded, extremely just and compares him with those great monarchs who earned fame for their equity and justice. On the other hand, he paints Murshid Qulī Khān as an oppressor against the defaulting zamīndārs and collectors almost to the extent of barbarity. According to the author Murshid Qulī Khān appointed Hindu officials only to find a pretext to convert them to the Islamic faith. As will be seen later, some of the examples of Murshid Qulī Khān's torture, as cited by the author, do not stand the test. It seems that the author had his own notion of virtue and vice and to him the persecution of the Hindus was a virtue for a Muslim ruler. It appears that in painting Murshid Qulī Khān as a virtuous man according to the author's own notion, he invented ingenious stories to suit his purpose. A critical analysis of the events in the light of other sources, however, brings out the real state of affairs. The other book written in Bengal is the Riād al-Salātīn of Ghulām Ḥusain Salīm.[1] Written in 1787, at the instance of George Udney of the postal service at Malda, the book deals with the history of Bengal in the Muslim period.

---

1. Bibliotheca Indica, 1890.

His account of Murshid Qulī Khān, is, however, based on Salīm Allāh's Tawārīkh-i-Bangālah, discussed above.

Other Persian records of the Mughal empire also help to a certain degree in the reconstruction of Murshid Qulī Khān's history. Of these records the letters, news-reports and revenue-manuals occupy important places. Aurangzīb's letters addressed to the princes, nobles and provincial officers offer valuable materials. Those compiled by ʿInāyat Allāh under the title Aḥkām-i-ʿĀlamgīrī[1] contain only a few letters addressed to Prince Muḥammad ʿAẓīm (sūbahdār of Bengal from 1697-1712) and to Murshid Qulī Khān. But these letters throw very useful light on Murshid Qulī Khān's position in the reign of Aurangzīb and on the emperor's attitude towards him. The Akhbārāt were the weekly, fortnightly and monthly news-reports, sent to the imperial court from different parts of the empire by officers entitled wāqiʿā-nawīs, sawānih-nigār and harkārah respectively. These reports, had they been all preserved, would have been extremely valuable for the reconstruction of the administrative and socio-economic history of the Mughal empire. But most of them have perished. English translations of a few news-reports of Hugli, mostly dealing with the English Company, are preserved in the Diary and

---

1. I.O. Ms. No. 3887.

Consultations. The Akhbārāt-i-Darbār-i-Mu'alla, Royal Asiatic Society collection, sometimes help in checking the chronology of Murshid Qulī Khān's early career. The revenue-manuals called Dastūr al-'Amals were the codes that guided the officials in their transactions and contained the statistics of the revenues. Several copies of the Dastūr al-'Amals are preserved in various libraries of the United Kingdom and of India. The date of their composition is subject to controversy, but there is no doubt that some of them contain the actual revenue figures of the later part of Aurangzīb's reign. The India Office manuscript no. 1387, which I have utilised and two other manuscripts consulted by Edward Thomas[1] are thus considered to contain the revenue figures of Aurangzīb's reign around 1700 A.D. These manuscripts, therefore, afford an opportunity to verify the revenue figures available from other sources. The Khulāsat al-Tawārīkh of Sujan Rāī (circa 1695 A.D.) and the Chahār Gulshan of Rāī Chatar Man Kāyath (circa 1720 A.D.) containing the statistical account of the Mughal empire may also be included in this category.[2] Though the statistical accounts of Bengal are not sufficient to make a comprehensive study, they also help in checking the evidence of Salīm Allāh and Salīm.

---

1. Thomas: Revenue Resources of the Mughal Empire, pp.42-43.
2. Translated by Jadunath Sarkar in India of Aurangzib.

As for the records of the European companies, we are fortunate to have a mass of contemporary documents of the English in Bengal. The whole series of the Diary and Consultations[1] of the English Council in Calcutta relevant to the period under review are available from 1704. They are mines of information, not only about the English trade, but also on the contemporary politics of the country, the relation of the English with the Mughal government and other foreign companies, and even the relation of the other companies with the government. The letters of the English Company's servants from Bengal to the home authorities also throw light on the contemporary situation. The full series of letters of the period are not available; but abstracts of some and the full text of others[2] supplement in a few points the evidence of the Consultations. The Home Miscellaneous Series of the India Office Library preserve the copies of farmāns, sanads, hasb al-hukms and parwānahs and also the contemporary writings relating to various other matters of historical importance. It is needless to describe all these records in detail as they have been described in the India Office Catalogues, but those utilised in the present study have been referred to in the proper places.

---

1. Bengal Public Consultations, Range I, vols. 1-6.
2. Letters Received from Bengal 1709-42, vol. I; Abstract of Letters from "Coast" and "Bay", vol. I.

Among the Dutch records the British Museum Additional Manuscript No. Add. 29095, entitled Persian copies with English translations of Firmans and Sunnuds granted to the Dutch Company, has been of immense value. The published records of the Dutch and the French Companies have also been utilised in part.[1] The writings of the contemporary and near-contemporary European travellers and writers also supply considerable material on the social and economic condition of the country. Particular mention may be made of the account[2] of Alexander Hamilton who visited Calcutta during the years 1705-08, and of the manuscript letter of an "Adventurer" who visited Calcutta in 1712, preserved in the Orme MS. which throws very important light on the political condition of Bengal in 1712, and the social condition of the European settlers.[3] Among the writers and travellers of a slightly later period mention may be made of Robert Orme,[4] Alexander Dow,[5] Stavorinus,[6] the Abbé Raynal,[7] and Major Rennell.[8] Even the accounts of

---

1. F.W. Stapel : Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlando-Indicum, Vol. IV; A. Martineau: Lettres et Conventions.
2. Alexander Hamilton: A New Account of the East Indies.
3. I.O. Records: Orme MS. India, Vol. IX.
5. Dow: The History of Hindostan.
4. Robert Orme: Historical Fragments of the Mogul Empire.
6. Stavorinus: Voyages to the East Indies.
7. Abbé Raynal: A Philosophical and political history of the Settlements and trade in the East and West.
8. Rennell: Memoir of the Map of Hindostan.

the 17th century writers like Bernier,[1] Tavernier[2] and Streynsham Master[3] have their uses since the accounts of the later writers may be verified with their own. The writings of the early English administrators and the reports and records of the early English administration in Bengal also supply valuable information. For example, James Grant's Analysis of the Finances of Bengal supplies the only detailed analysis of Murshid Qulī Khān's revenue reforms. In view of the great number of books available in this category, no exhaustive list is given here, but they have been referred to in foot notes as also in the bibliography.

The importance of the contemporary Bengali literature in the study of the social condition of the country needs no emphasis. A huge mass of Bengali literature was produced in the Mughal period both by the Muslims and the Hindus. Those found most useful for the present study are Bhārat Chandra's works,[4] Rāmprasād's Vidyā Sundara[5] and Rāmeśwar Bhaṭṭāchāryā's Śivāyana.[6] The histories of the Bengali literature by modern scholars have also been fruitfully utilised.

---

1. Bernier: Travels in the Mogul Empire.
2. Tavernier: Travels in India.
3. The Diaries of Streynsham Master, edited by R.C. Temple.
4. Bhārat Chandra Granthāvalī, published by Sāhitya Parishad, Calcutta, 1357 B.S.
5. Calcutta, 1313 B.S.
6. Edited by Yugilāl Hāldār, Calcutta University, 1957.

Scholars have hitherto been handicapped either by the lack of materials or because of the limitation of the scope of their works. With the help of the sources mentioned above, and by narrowing down the period, but expanding the scope of the enquiry, an attempt has been made in the following pages more adequately to study the life and times of Murshid Qulī Khān.

Murshid Qulī Khān received various titles from the Mughal emperors, his last title being Mu'tamin al-Mulk 'Alā' al-Daulah Ja'far Khān Nāṣirī Nāṣir Jang Bahādur. Charles Stewart, the earliest writer, preferred to call him by his earlier title Murshid Qulī Khān to avoid confusion between him and a later sūbahdār (Mīr Ja'far)[1]. From that time he became well-known under his earlier title of Murshid Qulī Khān. We have also adopted his earlier name and hence the title Murshid Qulī Khān and his times.

---

1. Stewart: History of Bengal, p. 352, note.

Chapter II

MURSHID QULĪ KHĀN's CAREER

Early life

The origin of Nawāb Murshid Qulī Jaʿfar Khān is lost in obscurity. According to the Maʾthir al-Umarā,[1] he was born of a Brahmin family, but was purchased by Ḥājī Shafīʿ Isfahānī, who brought him up like his own son and gave him the name of Muḥammad Hādī. Jadunath Sarkar is "tempted to imagine that he was a south-Indian Brahman",[2] but there is no evidence to confirm it. Ḥājī Shafīʿ Isfahānī served the Mughals in various capacities, such as dīwān-i-tan (dīwān of salaries), provincial dīwān of Bengal and dīwān of the Deccan,[3] but it is not known when and where he purchased this Brahmin boy.

Ḥājī Shafīʿ presumably left the Mughal service in the year 1690 (for in that year he is last heard of in the contemporary records) and retired to Persia. Muḥammad Hādī accompanied his patron, but on the latter's death returned to the Deccan and accepted service under Ḥājī ʿAbd Allāh Khurāsānī, the dīwān of Berar.[4] The date of his return

---

1. Vol. III, p. 751.
2. H.B. II, p. 400.
3. Māʾthir-i-ʿĀlamgīrī, tr. by J.N. Sarkar, pp. 48-64, 105, 119, 143, 151, 199 and 202.
4. Māʾthir al-Umarā, Vol. III, p. 751.

from Persia or of his admission to service under the dīwān of Berar is not known. Jadunath Sarkar conjectures that the date should be 1696,[1] and keeping in view the known dates of his later career, Sarkar's calculation seems to be correct. It is difficult to determine the exact nature of his service at this time. In the Māʾthir al-Umarā, the word used is naukar, meaning inferior servant, which in fact, leads to no conclusion. It admits of little doubt, however, that he was holding an office in the dīwānī department, because it was while holding this position, that he came to the notice of Aurangzīb, who was then in the Deccan and who took him into the Imperial service on the revenue side.

Imperial Service

Muḥammad Hādī was first appointed the dīwān of Haidarabad and faujdār of Yelkondal. He was also favoured with a mansab (rank) and the title of Kārṭalab Khān.[3]

---

1. H.B. II, p. 400.
2. Māṯhir al-Umarā, Vol. III, p. 751.
3. Ibid., pp. 751-52; Akḫbārāt, 16th Jamādī II, 44th year of Aurangzīb's reign; Salīm Allāh (T.B. f. 25b) and Salīm (Riāḍ, p. 244) suggest that he was given the title of Kārṭalab Khān on his appointment to the dīwānī of Bengal. But the evidence of Māʾthir al-Umarā seems to be correct, because as both Salīm Allāh and Salīm record, even before his appointment to Bengal, Muḥammad Hādī had rendered eminent services to the Emperor which might have entitled him to promotion, rank and title. Moreover, in the Akḫbārāt, he is called Kārṭalab Khān even as dīwān of Haidarabad and Faujdār of Yelkondal.

Both Salīm Allāh and Ghulām Ḥusain Salīm record that he was a sagacious man and an honest officer and that he rendered eminent service during Aurangzīb's warfare in the Deccan. He also curtailed expenditure in Orissa and thus became prominent among the imperial officials.[1] It follows, therefore, that Muḥammad Hādī justified his selection by Aurangzīb and his appointment to the imperial service. If his later life is any indication, it may be supposed that he made his mark in the dīwānī affairs right from the beginning of his career and that much of his success was due to the training he had received in early life from his masters, Ḥājī Shafī' and Ḥājī 'Abd Allāh, both of whom had held the office of dīwān in the Mughal empire. When, therefore, a highly efficient officer was required to fill the dīwānī in Bengal, the emperor's choice naturally fell on Kārṭalab Khān.[2]

Position of the provincial dīwān

The word "dīwān" connotes different things at different periods of Indo-Muslim history. In the Sultanate period, 'dīwān' stood for 'department' or 'ministry'.[2]

---

1. T.B. f. 25b; Riāḍ, p. 244; Akhbārāt, 16th Jamādī II, 44th year of Aurangzīb's reign. Both Salīm Allāh and Salīm state that Muḥammad Hādī had been transferred to Orissa prior to his appointment in Bengal, but according to the Akhbārāt, he was transferred from Haidarabad to Bengal.
2. For example, dīwān-i-wuzārat, dīwān-i-'ard etc.

There was an officer in the province to look to the revenue affairs, but he was under the control of the provincial governor and was known by the title'ṣāḥib-i-dīwān' or 'khwājah'.[1] During the reign of Akbar, the term 'dīwān' was applied to a person, the central revenue minister and not to ministries or departments; the revenue ministry and not other departments came to be known as 'dīwānī'.[2] Probably, the provincial revenue officer also came to be known as dīwān during this time. A further development was made by Akbar when, in the fortieth year of his reign, he freed the provincial revenue chiefs or dīwāns from the control of the provincial governors and brought them under the direct control of the central revenue ministry.[3] By the time of Aurangzīb, the division of authority between the two officials, the provincial governor (ṣūbahdār or nāẓim) and the provincial dīwān was complete, their duties and jurisdictions were clearly defined, and both were guided by regulations issued by the emperor from time to time. As Salīm Allāh puts it, "At that time, the reins of the control of affairs of the revenue of the kingdom and of the receipt and disbursement of the imperial

---

1. I.H. Qureshi: Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi, p. 189.
2. W.H. Moreland: Agrarian System of Moslem India, p. XV.
3. Akbarnāmah, vol. III, pp.605,670. Moreland: Agrarian System of Moslem India, p.109; P. Saran: The Provincial Government of the Mughals , p. 189.

revenues were completely under the jurisdiction of the provincial dīwān. The nāẓim (sūbahdār) of the time had jurisdiction over the administration and management of the kingdom and in keeping watch over and extirpating the arrogant and disobedient, the treacherous and refractory. Except with regard to the jāgīrs attached to the niẓāmat and personal manṣabs and presents, the nāẓim had no power to meddle with the Imperial revenue. The nāẓim, the dīwān and other officials were guided in the administration of affairs of the ṣūbah (province) by a dastūr al-ʿamal (procedure code) issued year after year by the emperor, and they were not permitted to deviate from or act contrary to the regulations."[1] On the basis of the commissions issued by Aurangzīb that are now extant,[2] the duties of a provincial dīwān may be stated to have been as follows:-

> He was to collect the revenue of the khālisah mahals (reserved lands), keep accounts of receipts and disbursements, disburse salaries to officers of the province, administer the financial business regarding the jāgīrs (assignments), supervise the pious endowments, allocate expenditure to different departments, scrutinise works of subordinate officers,

---

1. T.B., f. 25b.
2. Mirāt-i-Ahmadī, Supplementary text, p.172; Dow: History of Hindostan, Vol. III, Appendix No. 2.

> such as ʿāmils, report against corrupt officials, encourage the growth of agriculture, keep strict watch over the treasury, see that no money was withdrawn from the treasury without proper warrant, and forbid illegal exactions of money from the peasants; in short, the duty of provincial dīwān extended to all that belonged to the royal revenues of the province.[1]

Kārṭalab Khān in Bengal

On being appointed dīwān of Bengal, Kārṭalab Khān took leave of the emperor and proceeded to Jahāngīr-nagar (Dacca), then the headquarters of the province. He first waited upon Prince Muḥammad ʿAẓim al-Dīn, the sūbahdār of the province and then devoted himself to dīwānī affairs.[2] His first measure was to bring the entire body of revenue officials under his own direct control and to release them from the prince's interference.[3] He found that the country was rich and free from rebellious spirits.[4] He therefore adopted a two-fold policy to improve the financial position of the country. In the first place, he wanted to have an

---

1. The duties of a Provincial dīwān have been discussed on the basis of Mirāt-i-Ahmadī, by P. Saran. (Provincial Government of the Mughals, pp. 190-91). See also Aurangzīb's farmāns, translated by Jadunath Sarkar in Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1906.
2. T.B., f. 26a; Riād., p. 245.
3. T.B., f. 26a; Riād, p. 245.
4. Ibid.

idea of the exact position of the revenue receipts. To this end, he sent sagacious and efficient officers to each and every unit to make an accurate assessment of the revenue and sair taxes.[1] With their help he prepared a perfect revenue roll of the khālisah mahal (reserved area) and of the jāgīrs (assignments). Secondly, he devoted his attention to curtailing expenditure in the public departments. He also raised the imperial revenue, with the emperor's permission, by transferring the assignment of some jāgīrs from the rich province of Bengal to the less productive land in Orissa, and resuming the old jāgīrs for the crown.[2] As a result of these measures, he not only put a stop to the drain upon the imperial revenues, but in the very first year, he was able to send to the imperial treasury one crore of rupees.[3] This huge remittance further raised him in the estimation of the emperor, though it did not fail to create enemies among his colleagues in Bengal.

Prince ʿAẓīm al-Dīn and Kārṭalab Khān

The most important officer to rise in anger against him was the Sūbahdār Prince Muḥammad ʿAẓīm al-Dīn. Both Salīm Allāh and Salīm record an interesting story

---

1. Sair actually means custom duties, but during this period included all receipts other than the land-revenue.
2. T.B. f. 26b.
3. Riād, p. 245. According to Salīm Allāh (T.B., f. 26b) he sent one lakh of rupees which is obviously incorrect.

about how the prince instigated an attempt on Kārṭalab Khān's life.[1] Ever since the prince had been deprived of his control over the revenues, he had been in a bad humour with the dīwān. The dīwān's gradual rise in imperial favour was also an eye-sore to him. Though the dīwān paid all due respect to him, the prince was on the look out for an opportunity to kill the dīwān. But as he dreaded Aurangzīb's wrath, he wished to accomplish the murder in such a manner as would not implicate him in the affair. He therefore won over ʿAbd al-Waḥīd, chief of the naqdī troops (gentlemen troopers who received cash salaries) in Dacca and instigated him to surround the dīwān and his followers, demanding their arrears of pay and to kill him in the melee that might follow. The dīwān, however, was always cautious and guarded himself against any such mishap. He used to go out well-equipped and accompanied by trusted friends. One morning it so happened that while he was going to attend the prince as usual,[2] ʿAbd al-Waḥīd and his troopers surrounded him, demanded their pay and tried to create confusion. Kārṭalab Khān refused to be alarmed by their threats or to use force, but proceeded with them to the prince.[3] Convinced that the tumult of

---

1. T.B., f. 26b-28b; Riāḍ, pp. 246-49.
2. According to Salīm he was unattended (Riāḍ, p. 248)
3. According to Salīm the Khān displayed great nerve, faced them and drove them away. (Riāḍ, p. 248).

the naqdīs was due to the instigation of the prince, the Khān cast aside all decorum and openly charged the prince with responsibility for this misdemeanour. He also threatened him, saying, "All this riot is at your instigation. Emperor ʿĀlamgīr is not far away. Withhold your hands from these contemptible actions which are injurious and are affront to the lord's [emperor's] favour. Behold! verily my life is with your life (meaning my death will be avenged with your life)."[1] The prince was overawed both by the boldness of his speech and by apprehension of the emperor's wrath. He called ʿAbd al-Waḥīd and his troopers and threatened them with punishment for their mutinous behaviour. At the same time he professed ignorance of what had happened and assured the dīwān of his inviolable friendship. Kārṭalab Khān immediately returned to his office, called for the records, paid off the arrears of the naqdī troops and struck out their names from the rolls of the army. He also caused the events to be recorded by the newswriters and he himself sent a report of the affair to the imperial court.

---

1. T.B., f. 28a.

Dīwānī transferred to Makhsūsābād

Kārṭalab Khān was not content merely with sending reports to the Court. He was not free from apprehension that the sūbahdār might make further attemps on his life.[1] He therefore resolved to keep out of his way and to transfer the dīwānī to some distant place. His choice fell on Makhsūsābād, on the bank of the river Ganges (locally called the Bhāgīrathī). Kārṭalab Khān was not a man to leap in the dark. He called the zamīndārs and qānūngos to him and after much deliberation with them came to the conclusion that Makhsūsābād was indeed in the centre of his jurisdiction and that from that place he could keep watch over the whole province.[2] Moreover, himself being the faujdār of Makhsūsābād he felt himself to be in a stronger position and more secure there than in Dacca where he was second in point of rank to the sūbahdār. Another good reason for selecting Makhsūsābād may well be his growing concern with the European traders who had fortified their stations on the bank of the Ganges.[3] Having selected the place without taking permission from the prince, accompanied by his officers,

---

1. Ibid., f. 28b; Riād, p. 248.
2. Both Salīm Allāh (T.B., f.28b-29a) and Salīm (Riād, p. 249) discuss this in detail and prove the central position of Makhsūsābād.
3. For example, the English, the Dutch and the French fortified their settlements in Calcutta, Chinsura and Chandarnagar respectively. (Wilson I, p.147; H.B. II, p.395)

zamīndārs and the entire office establishment of the dīwānī he shifted to Makhsūsābād, built the kāchhārī (dīwānī office) and other establishments and settled there.[1]

The shifting of the dīwānī from Dacca to Makhsūsābād without permission of the sūbahdār may be explained. It has been mentioned already that the provincial dīwān, though inferior in rank to the sūbahdār, was not subordinate to the latter. But Kārtalab Khān's shifting the dīwānī without even waiting for the emperor's sanction may not be overlooked. It speaks of his unshaken confidence in the imperial favour. In fact, as was expected, when Kārtalab Khān's report and those of the newswriters reached the emperor in the Deccan, he took a serious view of the matter. According to the Riād, the emperor wrote a threatening letter to the prince, saying, "Kārtalab Khān is an officer of the emperor; in case a hair-breadth injury, in person or property, happens to him, I will avenge it on you, my boy."[2] The Ahkām-i-Ālamgīrī contains a letter addressed to Kārtalab Khān from the imperial court, saying, "The nāzim and other officers appointed to the sūbah will behave more gently (to you) than before, otherwise they will be reprimanded."[3]

1. T.B., f. 29a; Riād, p. 249.
2. Riād, p. 250, translation is that of Abdus Salam (Riād, tr. p. 252).
3. Ahkām, f. 155, translation is that of Jadunath Sarkar (H.B. II, p. 404)

The emperor also ordered the prince to leave Bengal and to retire to Bihar.[1] The prince leaving his son Farrukh Siyar as his deputy in Dacca, himself left for Bihar, accompanied by his household, and considering Patna as a suitable place for his residence, decided to stay there. With the emperor's permission, he rechristened the place ʿAẓīmābād after his own name and built a strong fort there.[2] The date of his departure from Dacca to Patna may be put at 1703. Until that year the wakīl of the English Old Company (London Company) had attended the court of Dacca, but early in 1704 he submitted the account of his "expenses at Dhacca /Dacca/ and tending the prince out of Bengall."[3] Dacca was thus deprived of the presence of the sūbahdār and henceforth the centre of gravity shifted to Makhsūsābād, first the seat of the dīwānī, but some years later the seat of the provincial government also.

Receipt of the title of Murshid Qulī Khān

After settling the dīwānī at Makhsūsābād, Kārṭalab Khān prepared the revenue roll of the second

---

1. T.B., f. 29b; Riād, p. 250.
2. Ibid; Aḥkām, f. 106b.
3. Consultations, 2nd March, 1704. In their general letter of 20th January, 1704 the Calcutta Council of the Old Company reported that the prince had left Bengal (I.O. Ms. Abstract of Letters received from "Coast" and "Bay", Vol. I. p. 3.

(or third) year of his office in Bengal. That done, he decided to present himself before the emperor at his court in the Deccan. On reaching the court he lavishly presented the emperor and the ministers with large sums of money and rarities of Bengal. At the same time he submitted his accounts to the imperial exchequer. After auditing his accounts the central dīwān gave him much credit for his exertions and for the increase in the revenues. The emperor presented him with a robe of honour, standard and kettle-drums and he was given the title of Murshid Qulī Khān. He was also allowed to rechristen Makhsūsābād Murshidabad after his own title.[1] Having been invested with honour and title, Kārtalab Khān (now Murshid Qulī Khān) returned to Bengal with renewed vigour and energy, where he passed the rest of the reign of Aurangzīb as the most favoured imperial officer. The name of Makhsūsābād was changed to Murshidabad, and a royal mint was also established there. The date of this event may be put as 1704, because during the early part of that year, when he was coming back to Bengal from the imperial court via Cuttack, he was met by the wakīl of the English.[2]

---

1. T.B., f. 30b; Riād, p. 252.
2. Consultations, 20th May & 8th June, 1704. Jadunath Sarkar (H.B. II, p. 404) states that Makhsūsābād was renamed Murshidabad "many years later", though he does not fix any date. Coins issued from Murshidabad mint and dated 1116/A.D.1704, are however available. (See S. Ahmad: A Supplement to Vol.III of the Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, p.78) There is therefore no reason to doubt the evidence of Salīm Allāh and Salīm.

Murshid Qulī Khān's position during the rest of Aurangzīb's reign

The absence of the sūbahdār from Bengal left Murshid Qulī Khān the highest imperial officer in the province. The presence in Dacca of Farrukh Siyar did not affect his position because it was only a private arrangement made by the sūbahdār without any proper imperial sanction.[1] Murshid Qulī Khān, on the other hand, continued to receive imperial favour. Originally the dīwān of Bengal and Orissa and faujdār of Makhsūsābād, he was subsequently appointed faujdār of four other places: Sylhet, Midnapur, Burdwan and Cuttack. He was also given the diwānī of the sūbahdār's jāgīr in Bengal.[2] In January, 1703, he was given the deputy sūbahdārī of Orissa but was soon promoted to be a full-fledged sūbahdār there. His mansab (rank) was raised from 1500 zāt / 1000 sawār to 2000 zāt / 1100 sawār.[3] In January, 1704, he was appointed the dīwān of Bihar in addition to all his other posts.[4]

---

1. At least there is nothing on record to show that the emperor recognised Farrukh Siyar as his father's deputy.
2. H.B., II, p. 399.
3. Ibid., p. 404; Mā'thir-i-Ālamgīrī, tr. by Jadunath Sarkar, p. 288.
4. Ahkām, f. 105b.

It follows therefore that by 1704 Murshid Qulī Khān held the subahdārī of one province i.e. Orissa, the dīwānī of three provinces, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and the faujdārī of five ~~places~~ districts. His position may be gauged from these appointments. He was all in all in both administrative and revenue affairs in one province and head of revenue matters in two others, while he was the executive head of four districts in Bengal. Moreover, the fact that he was the highest Imperial officer present in Bengal invested him with honour and prestige and raised him greatly in estimation of the people. This had happened within a short period from the commencement of his career.

Not only was Murshid Qulī Khān himself raised to prominence, but appointments to and dismissals from subordinate offices in Bengal were made according to his recommendation. For example, at his request, Sayyid Akram Khān and Shujā'al-Dīn Muhammad Khān were appointed his deputies in Bengal and Orissa respectively.[1] He was allowed to choose and appoint his deputy in Bihar as well.[2] At his recommendation 'Abd al-Rahīm was appointed the dāroghah of nawwārah (navy) and two news-writers,

---

1. T.B., f. 30b.
2. Ahkām, f. 105b.

Salīm Allāh and Muḥammad Khalīl, were dismissed from office.[1] In 1704, fourteen relatives of Murshid Qulī Khān reached Delhi from Iran. On his appeal, the Emperor granted a mansab to each of them and appointed them in different capacities to office in Bengal.[2]

Murshid Qulī Khān's good fortune did not go always unopposed. His opponents made fruitless attempts to lower him in the eyes of the emperor. As Jadunath Sarkar puts it, "he was regarded with envy, tinctured with contempt as for an upstart, by the old gang of the lazy inefficient well-born hereditary official class.... Murshid Quli being a novum homo (sic), was at first disobeyed and publicly slighted by the older class of officials, even of lower rank, especially the kokas or sons of the wet-nurses of the Emperor's sons and grandsons. These men on the strength of their personal influence in the royal harem, could always get letters of intercession from the princes and princesses to the Emperor against the diwān's decisions."[3]
But the letters from the Imperial court to Murshid Quli Khan, recorded in the Ahkām-i-Ālamgīrī[4] show that the

---

1. Ibid., f. 105b, 108a.
2. Ibid., f. 106a. They were related to him probably through his late patron Ḥājī Shafī' Khān.
3. H.B. II, pp. 400-401.
4. Ahkām, f. 198, 208a, 209, 210a

emperor turned a deaf ear to their representations against Murshid Qulī Khān and that the emperor placed unreserved confidence in the latter. One of the letters, for example, reads, "Thank God! You are the object of the emperor's favours and you should engage in doing your duties with perfect composure of mind. Protect the rāyats and make them prosper."[1]

A short time before the emperor's death, he recalled Muḥammad ʿAẓīm al-Dīn, the sūbahdār to his presence and asked him to leave Farrukh Siyar and Karīm al-Dīn (ʿAẓīm's sons) in Bengal and Bihar respectively.[2] Murshid Qulī Khān's position was further strengthened because he was asked to look to the affairs of Bengal and Bihar during the absence of the sūbahdār and both Farrukh Siyar and Karīm al-Dīn were asked to act according to his instructions.[3] Murshid Qulī Khān's position in Bengal, therefore, remained unrivalled during the reign of Aurangzīb and continued to be so during the first few months after Aurangzīb's death, till he was removed from Bengal by the next sovereign Shāh ʿĀlam Bahādur Shāh.

---

1. Ibid., f. 210a. Other letters have been translated by Jadunath Sarkar and need not be repeated here. (See H.B. II, pp. 401-403).
2. Aḥkām, f. 211a; Bahādurshāhnāmah, f. 22a; ʿIbratnāmah f.10a.
3. Aḥkām, f. 211a. English records also indirectly support this. In 1707, the Calcutta Council complained to Murshid Qulī Khān against Prince Karīm al-Dīn's oppressions over the English in Patna. See infra, p.196

Effect of Aurangzīb's death

Aurangzīb died in his camp in the Deccan on 3rd March, 1707. His death was followed by a war of succession in which all his three surviving sons with their children and retinues took part. For a time the whole empire was faced with lawlessness and a chaotic state of affairs. European traders were already being made cautious by such an unstable position of the empire. The English, for example, strongly guarded their fort in Calcutta and ordered their out-factories to send as much of their effects to Calcutta as possible.[1] It has already been mentioned that Murshid Qulī Khān was then the highest imperial officer present in Bengal, the sūbahdār being absent, taking part on behalf of his father in the war of succession, while Farrukh Siyar, the sūbahdār's deputy in Bengal had been put under Murshid Qulī Khān's guidance. Murshid Qulī Khān was therefore responsible for maintaining peace in Bengal. The English traders in Patna were put to trouble when Prince Karīm al-Dīn put guards on the English factory and demanded one lakh of rupees to be used for recruiting troops.[2] But to the surprise of all, Bengal and Orissa remained calm and

1. Consultations, 3rd and 7th April, 1707.
2. Ibid, 12th May, 1707

peaceful. Though the English traders had apprehended trouble from the neighbouring zamīndārs,[1] no case of lawlessness appears on record. It was no mean achievement of Murshid Qulī Khān that the area under his jurisdiction maintained peace and his administration remained vigorous during the war of succession and the accession of the next sovereign.

Accession of Bahādur Shāh

In the war of succession fortune favoured the eldest surviving son of Aurangzīb, Prince Muḥammad Muʿaẓẓam, who emerged victorious over his two other contending brothers and occupied the throne with the title of Shāh ʿĀlam Bahādur Shāh. The decisive battle was fought at Jajau in June, 1707, when he subdued Prince Muḥammad Āẓam. Thereafter, the new emperor found himself secure on the throne and he received congratulations from the princes and nobility, made fresh appointments and granted promotions. All the four sons of the emperor received new titles, appointments and handsome jāgīrs and had their mansabs raised. All the nobles who had fought for him got increments of rank and promotion in service. Some of the old imperial nobles who had fought against him were pardoned and also received into his favour. Others who

---

1. Ibid, 7th April, 1707

had remained neutral during the war of succession were also received back into the imperial favour and given rank and service according to their former stations.[1]

Power-politics in the Court of Bahādur Shāh

Bahādur Shāh's reign, therefore, began well. The contending princes were defeated and many of the leading nobles and officers of his father's time entered his service. There was hardly any reversal of his father's policy as far as appointments and promotions of officials were concerned. But that was but one side of the picture. Already there was evident a regrouping of powers within the court, the nobles centering round one or the other of the royal princes.[2] All the four sons of the new emperor were grown men, two of them Mu'izz al-Dīn and 'Aẓīm al-Dīn, actually having had a taste of power during the reign of their grandfather.[3] Bahādur Shāh pacified them all by giving them titles, increasing their rank, and by giving the jāgīrs and appointments in different provinces.[4] But instead of sending them to their respective provinces,

---

1. Bahādurshāhnāmah, f. 35-36; 'Ibratnāmah, f. 34-35; Muntakhab al-Lubāb, Vol. II, p. 598; See also Irvine: Later Mughals, Vol. I, pp. 35 ff.
2. The court picture is beautifully drawn by Īrādat Khān, see Tārīkh-i-Irādat Khān; see also Irvine: Later Mughals, Vol. I.
3. Irvine: Later Mughals, Vol I, p. 4.
4. Bahādurshāhnāmah, f. 35-36; Muntakhab al-Lubāb, Vol. II, p. 598; Irvine: Later Mughals, Vol. I, p. 36.

they were allowed to nominate their deputies to the provinces while they themselves stayed in the court. The princes thus got an opportunity to influence court-politics and to push their own nominees to the key-positions in the state.[1] The appointments in the provinces were also influenced by the princes, particularly when they concerned provinces in their respective governorships.

Removal of Murshid Qulī Khān from Bengal

On the very first day of the commencement of the new reign, when Bahādur Shāh made appointments, his second son, ʿAẓīm al-Dīn (now styled ʿAẓīm al-Shāh), got the governorship of the provinces of Bengal and Bihar with permission to nominate his deputies.[2] The position of Murshid Qulī Khān apparently remained unaffected, because he was the dīwān of these two provinces and sūbahdār and dīwān of Orissa. One Consultation of the English Council in Calcutta records that initially Murshid Qulī Khān was allowed to act as deputy of Prince ʿAẓīm al-Shāh.[3] Farrukh Siyar who had been appointed deputy sūbahdār during the last part of Aurangzīb's reign

1. The most important example is the appointment of wazīr. See Irvine: Op.cit. pp. 36-67, 125.
2. Muntakhab al-Lubāb, Vol. II, p. 598; Irvine: Later Mughals, Vol. I, p. 36.
3. Consultations, 1st November, 1707. The Calcutta Council got the information on 1st November, 1707, when he had already been removed on 18th October and a new dīwān had been appointed in his place who reached Bengal towards the first part of 1708.

left for Court,[1] as a result of which Murshid Qulī Khān was advanced to the deputy sūbahdārī. But this position of Murshid Qulī Khān was only temporary. ʿAẓīm al-Shān began to dominate his father and so influenced him as to receive the appointment of his own nominees in both his provinces. On 18th October, 1707 (21st Rajab, 1119) Ḍiyāʾ Allāh Khān was appointed the dīwān of Bengal and faujdār of Murshidabad and Shamshīr Khān the dīwān of Bihar.[2] On 24th January, 1708 (30th Shawwāl, 1119) the province of Orissa was added to the sūbahdārī of ʿAẓīm al-Shān.[3] On 4th March, 1708 (11th Dhīl-ḥijja, 1119) Sarbuland Khān was appointed faujdār of Burdwan and Akbarnagar (Rajmahal).[4] Murshid Qulī Khān was removed from all his posts in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa because on 25th January, 1708 (2nd Dhīl-Qaʿda, 1119) he was appointed the dīwān of as far a place as the Deccan.[5]

Jadunath Sarkar's opinion that Farrukh Siyar was appointed the sūbahdār of Orissa, replacing Murshid Qulī Khān, is not correct. It is not known whence he got this information, but Niʿmat Khān in his Bahādurshāhnāmah

---

1. It is implied in a consultation of the Calcutta Council which records that both Farrukh Siyar and Ḍiyāʾ Allāh Khān on their way from the Imperial court reached the confines of Bengal in February, 1708 (Consultations, 18th February, 26th April, 1708).
2. Bahādurshāhnāmah, f. 63b.
3. Bahādurshāhnāmah, f. 90b.
4. Ibid, f. 190b.
5. Ibid, f. 93a and b.

categorically says that ʿAẓīm al-Shān was appointed the sūbahdār of Orissa.[1] The English records also support this; the English always refer to ʿAẓīm al-Shān as the sūbahdār of all the three provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.[2] Jadunath Sarkar further says that "ʿAẓīm-al-Shān paid his rival in Bengal fully back for all that he had suffered silently in the days of his grand-father."[3] There is no doubt that ʿAẓīm al-Shān did prompt the emperor to remove Murshid Qulī Khān, but the emperor did no injustice to the veteran civil servant. He not only gave Murshid Qulī Khān the dīwānī in the Deccan, but increased his rank by four hundred sawār.[4]

Murshid Qulī Khān recalled to Bengal

It is not possible to follow Murshid Qulī Khān's career in the Deccan owing to lack of materials. But ʿAẓīm al-Shān's arrangement in Bengal did not prove successful. He pushed his own nominees in all the three provinces. Sayyid Ḥusain ʿAlī Khān was appointed his deputy in Bihar,[5] Khān Jahān Bahādur in Orissa,[6] and Sarbuland Khān in Bengal.[7] Sarbuland Khān quarrelled with Farrukh Siyar

---

1. Ibid, f. 90b. 2. Cf. Consultations, 17th Aug.1711.
3. H.B., II, p. 405. 4. Bahādurshāhnāmah, f. 93.
5. Ibid, f. 124b.
6. Irvine: Later Mughals, Vol. I, p. 200.
7. Māthir al-Umarā, Vol.III, p. 802. According to Māthir al Umarā he was sent to Bengal to carry out settlement operations, but the English records call him Subah (used for sūbahdār) and negotiated with him for a parwānah paying Rs. 45,000 (Consultations, 20th May, 1st June, 10th August, 1709.

and was finally recalled by ʿAẓīm al-Shān. On his way to court he was appointed faujdār of Kara in the province of Allahabad.[1] The deputy sūbahdārī of Bengal was given to Khān Jahān Bahādur[2] who was already holding the same post in Orissa. In January, 1710, Ḍiyāʾ Allāh Khān was killed in the streets of Murshidabad by the naqdī troopers.[3] ʿAẓīm al-Shān, therefore, secured the recall of the experienced Murshid Qulī Khān and his re-appointment as the dīwān of Bengal.[4]

In 1710, when Murshid Qulī Khān was reappointed the dīwān of Bengal, ʿAẓīm al-Shān was still the sūbahdār of the three provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The former differences between him and the prince must have been settled before the appointment. The change was probably due to the prince's policy of conciliating and winning over to his side as many nobles and officers as possible, because all the princes were then preparing to strengthen themselves against their other brothers. Irādat Khān draws a picture of the politics of the princes in the imperial court. A particular instance cited by him is how Prince Jahān Shāh lost influence because of his haughty

---

1. Māthir al-Umara, Vol. III, p. 802.
2. Ibid., p. 951.
3. Consultations, 26th January, 1710.
4. The English first got the news of his reappointment on 31st March, 1710 (Consultations, 31st March, 1710).

nature and how ʿAẓīm al-Shān gained in influence upon the emperor and the nobles during the emperor's return march from the Deccan.[1] The historian further states that during this time ʿAẓīm al-Shān deliberately adopted a policy of winning over the officers so that they might assist him in the war of succession, which everybody knew was drawing near.[2] That the differences between the prince and Murshid Qulī Khān were settled is also borne out by the fact that Murshid Qulī Khān on arrival in Bengal was able to engage himself in business with as much earnestness and repose as before. A Consultation of the Calcutta Council describes him (Murshid Qulī Khān) as being "entirely his [ʿAẓīm al-Shān's] creature."[3] Another Consultation records that soon after Bahādur Shāh's death Murshid Qulī Khān struck coin in the name of ʿAẓīm al-Shān, while the throne was still a matter of contention to be decided by the sword.[4] It was reported from Qasimbazar that "the duan [dīwān] to make the report of Mahmud Azeem's being king to be credited, has presented Monickchund [Mānikchānd] with an elephant and seerpaw [sar-o-pā, robe of honour, covering from head to foot] and Phuttechund [Fatehchānd] with a horse and seerpaw,

---

1. Tārīkh-i-Irādat Khān, f. 54a.
2. Ibid., f. 55a.
3. Consultations, 12th March, 1712.
4. Ibid., 25th March, 1712.

and declares if any person shall presume to say he did not believe Mahmud Azeem was king, he should suffer death and have his house plundered."[1] The foregoing evidence indicates that on his reappointment in Bengal, Murshid Qulī Khān regained the position he held under Aurangzīb, having ʿAẓīm al-Shān, the sūbahdār of the three provinces, as his patron. But his real position was most clearly manifested in the case of Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Khān, the faujdār of Hugli.

Fight with Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Khān

At about the same time as Murshid Qulī Khān was reappointed the dīwān of Bengal, Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Khān was appointed the faujdār of Hugli and admiral of all sea-ports in the coast of Coromandel.[2] Both Salīm Allāh and Salīm record the relations of Murshid Qulī Khān with Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Khān as follows.[3] As Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Khān obtained his office of faujdār of Hugli from ʿĀlamgīr (correctly Bahādur Shāh)[4] he considered himself independent of Jaʿfar Khān's (Murshid Qulī Khān) authority. But upon Jaʿfar Khān's representation to ʿĀlamgīr of the inconvenience

---

1. Consultations, 7th April, 1712.
2. Ibid, 27th February, 1710. Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Khān reached Hugli some time before 25th May, 1710, when some English factors paid him a visit.
3. T.B., f. 43a-45a; Riād, pp. 260-62.
4. Salīm does not give the name of the emperor.

of such divided authority, the emperor annexed the faujdārī of Hugli to the ṣūbahdārī. Jaʿfar Khān immediately dismissed Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Khān and appointed his own nominee Walī Beg to succeed him. When Walī Beg reached Hugli the dismissed Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Khān quietly came out of the fort with the object of repairing to the court. But Walī Beg summoned Kinkar Sen, the pīshkār of the late faujdār, to submit accounts of receipts and disbursements of the faujdārī during the office of Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Khān. But Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Khān would not allow his pīshkār to be carried away and prepared to defend him. At this Walī Beg blocked his way and prevented Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Khān from marching to the court. Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Khān, secretly assisted by the Dutch and the French, entrenched himself in the plain of Chandarnagar. Walī Beg advanced with his army to the field of ʿĪdgāh, near the tank of Devidas about a mile and a half in front of Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Khān's entrenchment, and wrote to Jaʿfar Khān for reinforcements. In the meantime, slight skirmishes ensued, till Mullā Tarsam (Rustam?) Turānī, Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Khān's deputy and Kinkar Sen, assisted by the Dutch and the French, marched out in the plain and challenged Walī Beg. Walī Beg prudently entrenched himself and without giving battle waited for reinforcements. Shortly after, there came reinforcements under

Dulpat Singh who brought with him a threatening parwānah from Jafar Khān to the Europeans, for presuming to protect a rebel. By the advice of his European friends, Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān took Dulpat Singh by surprise. Under pretence of negotiating a treaty, he sent a messenger to Dulpat Singh. In order to make the messenger more conspicuous, he twisted round his head a red shawl. While the messenger was handing a letter over to Dulpat Singh, a European gunner aimed a cannon at the latter and shot him dead on the spot. Dulpat Singh's men finding their leader was dead, fled and took shelter with Walī Beg in the fort. Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān took this opportunity to march to Delhi.

A contemporary manuscript letter of an unknown adventurous Englishman[1] gives some more details on the subject. We quote the relevant account in extenso:[2]

"Shallum [Shāh ʿĀlam] the emperor from a meaner station advanced ( )[3] who from gentilism [Hinduism] embraced Mahometism [Muhammadanism] to the government of

1. From his own account it appears that the adventurer was a dismissed soldier of the Madras settlement who had reached Calcutta on 29th November, 1712. He first asked for service in the Calcutta factory of the English, but as he was not provided with any, he joined Murshid Qulī Khān's army against Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān. The letter has been published in Bengal: Past and Present, Vol. XXVI, pp. 113-132. L.M. Anstey has identified the adventurer with John Burnell, who as a map maker earned Rs. 200 from the Calcutta Council. Bengal: Past and Present, vol. XXXIV, pp. 38-39.
2. Orme MS. India, vol. IX, pp. 2164-65.
3. Space vacant but the name intended is either Kārṭalab Khān or Muḥammad Hādī.

Bengal, creating him annabob or viceroy thereof, changing his name (it being a mark of high honour) to that of Mursed Cola Con [Murshid Quli Khan], but the death of Shawlam [Shah Alam] happening whilst he was in the government, the king's children broke out into an open war for the crown; Mursed Cola Con sided with Mosidean [Muizz al-Din Jahandar Shah] the eldest,[1] and whilst they managed the war in Industan he sends for Juda Con [Diya' al-Din Khan] nabob of Ballasore and governor of Hugley, to bring in his rents received as part of the king's revenues, that he might make his accounts up to the king, seeing he could not tell that money was brought in.

"Upon which Joda Con goes to the annabob at Moxudbath [Makhsusabad = Murshidabad] and takes along with him Kingcar Sen [Kinkar Sen], his banian or rent-gatherer informing him that they would deliver in no money till there was a proper new king established; others will have it that the annabob offering a daughter in marriage to Joda Con he refused the proposals, because the annabob had been a servant under his father; but be it how it will, he was scarce got down to Hugley, ere Holy Beg [Wali Beg] was sent down to take from his government and to declare war, upon which Joda Con fortifies

---

1. The statement is incorrect. Murshid Quli Khan did not join the war of succession himself. He, however, declared the accession of 'Azim al-Shan.

himself on the north boundaries of Chandernagur, flinging up several batteries to the river ward and land board, mounting thereon between 50 and 60 guns, mostly between sixteen and eighteen pounders.

"Collbeg Con [Qulī Beg Khān?], the elder brother of Holy Beg [Walī Beg] being general of the horse marches into the field and encamps to the westward of Chandernagur, blocking up that side, and sends another strong detachment to the other side of the river to lie in those batteries; Holy Beg keeping in the castle at Hugley; the batteries that were flung up to dismount the artillery on those Joda Con had raised, were taken from them by Captain Courtney, he driving them the same time into the castle, upon the news of which Mursed Cola Con recalls Holy Beg from his command, and sends down the emmer [amīr, Mīr Abū Ṭālib] of Bengal to carry on the war.

"The emmer being come to his command with 1000 horse and 6000 foot, encamps before Chandernagur, giving ('tho' I believe by the annabob's order) all the European soldiers into the charge of a rascally padre of the Augustin Order, of which more hereafter; he lay before it a considerable time, but did nothing having several misfortunes attending him, as a mutiny among his men, three hundred horse going from him together, but upon the promise

of two months' pay advance they came back; he lay about two months longer before it, when the confirmation came of Forixears [Farrukh Siyar's] being king, he took the opportunity of a dark night accompanied with two others in the habit of fuckears [faqīrs] and secretly departed from the army, who in the morning finding their general gone, disbanded, and this far as to the war of Hugley."

Later writing about himself the 'adventurer' gives some more information which may be summarised as follows.[1] When he was denied an appointment by John Russell, president of the English Council in Calcutta (1711-1713), he went with a letter of recommendation from his friend Captain Courtney to the Danish chief, who in turn gave him another letter to the amīr of Bengal (Murshid Qulī Khān's general against Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān). The amīr of Bengal appointed him to the command of one hundred European soldiers on a pay of one hundred rupees per month. The amīr also asked him to write to Captain Courtney that if the latter accepted the service of the amīr, he would be paid Rs. 20,000 "when the wars were over, the one half to be deposited in the hands of Monseur Attroop [the Danish chief] and the other half in

---

1. Orme MS. India, vol. IX, pp. 2166-70.

the hands of Mynheer Hoffmaster [the Dutch chief]."[1] When the 'adventurer' got ready to take up his post, he was referred to the padre of the Augustine Order, who was appointed the bakhshī (pay-master) of the European soldiers by Murshid Qulī Khān. He went to the padre who received him civilly. They both drew up a plan to attack Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān's camp next day, but when the next day came, the padre was nowhere to be found. Later, when the 'adventurer' tried to collect his own soldiers and went to get money from the padre, the latter came to a clash with him. On one occasion the padre instigated his followers to attempt the life of the 'adventurer'. On representation to the amīr of Bengal the amīr said that he could not do anything since the padre had been appointed by the dīwān himself.

The Consultations of the English Council in Caloutta supply some information which help in determining the chronology of these events. On 13th October, 1711 the Council records that "our friend Zoody Cawn [Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān] is turned out".[2] On 18th December, 1711 they record that Walī Beg was the new deputy governor of Hugli.[3] On 14th July, 1712 it is recorded that Walī Beg had asked for assistance of the English in his fight against Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān, but they answered that as they were merchants,

1. Ibid., p. 2165.
2. Consultations, 13th October, 1711.
3. Ibid., 18th December, 1711.

they could not involve themselves in the affairs of the native government but that they were ready to mediate between the contending parties.[1] On 11th August, 1712, the Council received a letter from Mīr Abū Ṭālib "who is appointed governor of Hugly, wherein he writes he shall be willing to take that government upon him, if a peace by our endeavours can be mediated between Zoody Cawn and Woolibeig (Mussud Cooly Cauns deputy), between those partys there happens almost daily skirmishes in Hugly".[2] The Council decided to send to Hugli Mr. Robert Hedges and Mr Williamson with 50 soldiers to mediate between the contending parties.[3] On 26th August, the mediators came back to Calcutta and reported that their attempts at mediation had been a failure mainly because of the opposition of Walī Beg.[4] On 15th September, 1712, Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān wrote to the Council seeking their mediation, suggesting that if the governor himself went to mediate, Walī Beg might listen to him. The Council agreed that the governor should go to Hugli with Messrs Hedges and Williamson, escorted by 150 soldiers,[5] This time also the mediation failed mainly due to Walī Beg, who could

---

1. Consultations, 14th July, 1712.
2. Ibid., 11th August, 1712.
3. Ibid., 16th August, 1712.
4. Ibid., 26th August, 1712.
5. Ibid., 16th September, 1712.

not give any final word for settlement without the consent of his brother, who was the commander of the forces, since even if he gave any word, his brother would not agree.[1] On 10th November, 1712, the Council records, "Mier Obbootalib [Abū Ṭālib] being arrived near Hugly with his forces and being inclined to come to an accommodation with Zoody Cawne [Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān], who declares himself desirous to be at peace with everybody - ordered that Mr. Robert Hedges and Mr. John Dean proceed to Hugly with all convenient speed to congratulate Mier Obbootalib on his arrival and endeavour to persuade him to agree on reasonable terms with Zoody Cawne."[2] But their attempts were again a failure. The mediators returned from Hugli as they "find no likelyhood of peace, Mier Obbootalib declaring he will agree to no terms except Zoody Cawne will wait on Mussud Cooley Cawne the duan at Muxodavad, which Zoody Cawne will not do because he knows him to be his inveterate enemy, and trecherously base to the greatest degree."[3] On 24th April, 1713, the Council heard that Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān was appointed dīwān of the western country near the coast of Coromandel[4] and on 25th June, the Council lent two bajrās (skiffs)

1. Ibid., 22nd September, 1712.
2. Ibid., 10th November, 1712.
3. Ibid., 19th November, 1712.
4. Ibid., 24th April, 1713.

to Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān to help him in his march towards Delhi.[1]

A close study of the three sets of evidence discussed above gives a tolerably clear idea of the events that passed between the two officers, Murshid Qulī Khān and Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān. The chronology of the events is sufficiently obvious from the English records. Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān joined his Bengal post on (or a little before) 25th May, 1710, was dismissed on (or a little before) 13th October, 1711 and his fight with Murshid Qulī Khān continued till the accession of Farrukh Siyar towards the beginning of 1713. The chronology of Salīm Allāh in putting Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān's appointment to Bengal in the reign of ʿĀlamgīr, is therefore wrong. Salīm Allāh also refers to the dīwān as Jaʿfar Khān, but as will be seen hereafter, the dīwān received this title some time later.

There seems to be no doubt that Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān was dismissed because of Murshid Qulī Khān's representation to the emperor against divided authority. That Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān had been invested with greater power than an ordinary faujdār is evidenced from the English records. The Consultation dated 25th May, 1710 reads, "he is a greater man than has ever been governour [faujdār] of Hugly; he is also made governor of Ballasore and of all seaports

---

1. Consultations, 25th June, 1713.

here and on the coast of Coromandall; he was put into these places by the king himself, and is independent of any duan or subah".[1] There may have been other reasons also for Murshid Qulī Khān's representation against Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān and the latter's dismissal. Both Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān and Kinkar Sen, seem to have indulged in private trade and probably used their official position to avoid payment of duties, defrauding the revenue.[2] There was probably a personal jealousy also between Murshid Qulī Khān and Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān. The rumour of Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān's refusal to marry Murshid Qulī Khān's daughter, as recorded by the 'adventurer', may or may not be true, but there seems to be no doubt that Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān, having claims to high birth,[3] looked upon Murshid Qulī Khān as an upstart.

According to Salīm Allāh, on the representation of Murshid Qulī Khān, the emperor annexed the faujdārī of Hugli to the sūbahdārī and Murshid Qulī Khān at once dismissed Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān and appointed his own nominee Walī Beg. But the sūbahdār or the dīwān was not the

---

1. Consultations, 25th May, 1710.
2. The Consultations of 2nd May, 1712 allude to this saying that Murshid Quli Khān imprisoned a merchant, Auga Ruffa, as he (Murshid Qulī Khān) thought that the goods Auga Ruffa had brought from Patna belonged to Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān and Kinkar Sen.
3. Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān was the nephew of one minister of Aurangzīb and the son-in-law of another. See Ma'thir al-Umarā, Vol. III, p. 36. See also H.B. II, p. 408.

appointing or dismissing authority of the faujdār and Murshid Qulī Khān was not even a ṣūbahdār. It seems, therefore, probable that Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān was dismissed by the emperor and that Murshid Qulī Khān himself was appointed the faujdār of Hugli. Had he not been made faujdār, he could not have appointed Walī Beg his deputy. The English records, which always use the term 'governor' for faujdār, use the term 'deputy governor' for Walī Beg.[1]

There exists also some amount of confusion regarding the cause of Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān's fight against Murshid Qulī Khān. Salīm Allāh, Salīm and the account of the English adventurer attribute it to Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān's refusal to submit the accounts of his receipts of royal revenues to the dīwān. If Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān was independent of the dīwān's authority, as suggested by the sources cited above, it is difficult to explain why the dīwān should have asked for his accounts. The narrative of the English adventurer shows that Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān did not flatly refuse to submit the accounts, but rather refused to submit them "till there was a new king established." It seems, therefore, that although Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān was more powerful than an ordinary faujdār, having been invested with the power of high admiral of the whole

---

1. Consultations, 18th October, 1711.

Coromandel coast, his financial transactions as a faujdār of the port of Hugli were under the authority of the dīwān, who was supreme over revenue matters in the province. It may also be that, on dismissal, he was ordered by the emperor to submit accounts to the dīwān of the province. But Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān's refusal to submit the accounts "till there was a new king established" and his activities as evidenced by the English records give an impression that he was playing for high political stakes. Throughout the whole period of his stay in Hugli, Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān was in close touch with the imperial court. He was friendly to both 'Aẓīm al-Shān and Farrukh Siyar and had correspondence with the former while he lived.[1] He also tried to influence the imperial court against his enemy, Murshid Qulī Khān.[2] He advised the English Council in Calcutta not to have trade negotiations with the dīwān, giving them hope that he (Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān) would procure the prince's nishān (letter patent) for them.[3] The sudden death of Bahādur Shāh also induced him to hold on to his station, expecting favour from whichever prince was successful in the war of succession. On one occasion, it was

---

1. Consultations, 26th May, 13th July, 18th Juli, 31st July, and 17th August, 1711.
2. Ibid., 31st July, 1711; 23rd, 28th February, and 16th, 27th March, 1713.
3. Ibid., 18th July, 1711.

actually rumoured that he was going to be reinstated in Bengal.[1] That he was biding his time is evident from the fact that he did not leave Bengal till he had got a new assignment from the new Emperor, Farrukh Siyar.

The struggle between Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān and the dīwān continued for more than a year. The dīwān at first appointed Walī Beg the deputy faujdār of Hugli, who took possession of the Hugli fort and with the help of his brother Qulī Beg Khān, the commander of the army, besieged the entrenched Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān in the plain of Chandarnagar. During this time, the English twice tried to mediate between the contending parties, but their attempts failed mainly, as the records show, because of the intransigence and duplicity of Walī Beg.[2] Salīm Allāh and Salīm record that the Europeans, mainly the Dutch and the French, helped Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān. The narrative of the 'adventurer' who actually joined the war, shows that the chiefs of the European companies remained neutral, but individual soldiers served under Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān and helped him a great deal in opposing the dīwān.

---

1. Consultations, 3rd June, 1712.
2. The first attempt at negotiation failed because Walī Beg did not stick to his own word for a cease-fire. (Consultations, 26th August, 1712). The second attempt failed because though Walī Beg accepted the English proposals for settlement on condition of their approval by his brother, the approval was never available. (Consultations, 22nd September, 1712).

At the failure of Walī Beg, Murshid Qulī Khān was enraged and recalled him and appointed the amīr of Bengal to the command. Salīm Allāh's evidence that Murshid Qulī Khān sent reinforcements to Walī Beg under Dulpat Singh, is not corroborated by the English records. Even if Salīm Allāh's evidence is correct, the reinforcement of Dulpat Singh did not fare better, for in Salīm Allāh's account, he was killed by Ḍiyā'al-Dīn Khān with the help of a European gunner.

The amīr of Bengal, Mīr Abū Ṭālib,[1] the newly appointed faujdār of Hugli, began his operations against Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān in November, 1712. But in spite of all his efforts, he could not do better than Walī Beg and could not dislodge Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān. In the first place, the Portuguese commander of the European soldiers proved disloyal. Secondly, there was disaffection among his soldiers, 300 of whom deserted him and could only be brought back by paying them two months' salary in advance. Murshid Qulī Khān probably could not send any large reinforcements to him because at this time he was facing another army sent against him by Farrukh Siyar who was then a competitor for the imperial throne.[2]

1. The identification of the amir of Bengal with Mīr Abū Ṭālib is quite clear. According to the narrative of the 'adventurer', the amir of Bengal was appointed by the diwān after Walī Beg was recalled. The 'adventurer' himself came to Bengal in November, 1712 and found the amir of Bengal in command. The Consultations record that Mīr Abū Ṭālib was appointed the faujdār of Hugli and took over command by 10th November, 1712.
2. For details see infra, pp. 74-80

Story of Kinkar Sen

Both Salīm Allah and Salīm give the following story[1] of the fate of Kinkar Sen, the former pīshkār of Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān, who took an active part in the latter's fight against the dīwān. Kinkar Sen followed his master to Delhi, but Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān died soon after his arrival and so Kinkar Sen returned to Bengal. On reaching Murshidabad, Kinkar Sen, without any apprehension or fear, waited upon Murshid Qulī Khān. Salīm goes a step further and says that Kinkar Sen saluted Murshid Qulī Khān with his left hand, which is highly discourteous among the Muslims. Murshid Qulī Khān apparently forgave him, but bore a grudge in his heart. He appointed Kinkar Sen a collector of revenue in Hugli, but at the end of the year when the latter came to Murshidabad to settle accounts, he was confined on a charge of malversation. He was ordered to be fed only with buffalo's milk and salt,[2] which caused disorders in his bowels so that he died soon after his return to Hugli.

This story has been accepted by modern scholars.[3]

---

1. T.B., f. 45a; Riād, pp. 262-63.
2. According to Salīm (Riād, p. 263) Murshid Qulī Khān forced him to swallow some laxative which caused his death.
3. Stewart: History of Bengal, p. 376; H.B., II, p. 508.

It is not improbable for Murshid Qulī Khān to have punished Kinkar Sen, who had been a party to the rebellious conduct of his enemy Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān. But an analysis of the story in the light of other evidence shows that there was some confusion about it in the mind of the chroniclers. The first difficulty concerns the date of the event. As usual, Salīm Allāh and Salīm do not supply any date, but they categorically state that Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān died after reaching Delhi (ba-Dihlī rasīdah) and that Kinkar Sen returned after the former's death. As Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān left Bengal in June, 1713, the chroniclers, therefore, suggest ~~the~~ a date in 1713-1714. But there is undoubted evidence to show that Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān lived at least up to 1718. He assisted the Surman embassy at Delhi during the years 1716-1717.[1] In 1718, he was appointed the dīwān of the Deccan vice Diyānat Khān by Farrukh Siyar.[2] Secondly, according to Salīm Allāh, Kinkar Sen accompanied his master Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān to Delhi and left that place after the latter's death. The English records also give an impression that Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān left Bengal for Delhi.[3] Supposing therefore that Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān died in Delhi, which must be put not before 1718, Salīm Allah's account will lead us to conclude that

---

1. Wilson II, II, pp. XXXII, 47.
2. Mā'thir al-Umarā, Vol. III, p. 36.
3. Consultations, 25th June, 1713.

Kinkar Sen had been with Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān for all these years, for which there is no evidence and which goes indeed against the contention of Salīm Allāh himself. Thirdly, after 1715-1716,[1] Murshid Qulī Khān was at the height of his power. Kinkar Sen's patron Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān on the other hand had died. Even during his life-time all Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān's attemps against Murshid Qulī Khān had failed. How could Kinkar Sen, formerly the pīshkār of Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān and now without any job, have dared to insult Murshid Qulī Khān unless he had gone out of his mind? Fourthly, the chroniclers record that Kinkar Sen died of bowel troubles caused by the laxative, buffalo's milk and salt, ordered to be fed to him by Murshid Qulī Khān. But why should Murshid Qulī Khān have had to adopt such an ingenious process to remove a petty officer? The story, therefore, does not ring true.

The English records inform us that the Calcutta Council had been advised in a general letter from Qasimbazar factory, dated 23rd September, 1721 that "Kinker Sein [Kinkar Sen] is ordered down to Hughly [Hugli] and has left that place, the nabob [nawāb i.e. Murshid Qulī Khān] having given him a seerpaw [sar-o-pā]"[2] Neither the Consultations nor the general letter identify this

1. Murshid Qulī Khān became sūbahdār in 1715-16. See infra, p. 91.
2. Consultations, 2nd October, 1721.

Kinkar Sen. There is no second reference to any Kinkar Sen in the English records later to that mentioned. When, therefore, there is a sudden reference, quite out of context, it may be presumed that either he was in some way connected with the Company or that he had played an important part at some earlier date and was thus well-known to them. The probability seems very great that the Kinkar Sen of 1721 was the same as the Kinkar Sen who had been pīshkār of Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān. But if this is so, he was alive till at least 1721, when he was ordered to go to Hugli and received a sar-o-pā from Murshid Qulī Khān. This evidence, therefore, lends support to one part of Salīm Allāh's evidence and opposes the other. The English report supports Salīm Allāh's statement that Murshid Qulī Khān forgave Kinkar Sen. But the evidence that he was honoured by Murshid Qulī Khān seems to disprove Salīm Allāh's hint that the reconciliation was only a feigned one, and that the dīwān was still plotting Kinkar Sen's overthrow.

Change of government in Delhi

While Murshid Qulī Khān's fight with Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān, the dismissed faujdār of Hugli, was going on, momentous events were taking place in Delhi. Emperor Bahādur Shāh died in Lahore in February, 1712 and his death was

followed by a war of succession in which all his four surviving sons took part. In Bengal, Murshid Qulī Khān at once declared ʿAzīm al-Shān emperor and struck coins and read the khuṭbah (lecture in Friday prayer) in his name.[1] He fortified Murshidabad and an English report records that he had mounted "all his great guns, which are reported to be a great many in number, and keeps his elephants and horses in a readiness, and his foot soldiers in exactest discipline, he has likewise fortified several out places, for his own security."[2] But unfortunately for him, ʿAẓīm al-Shān fell in battle and Bahādur Shāh's eldest son Muʿizz al-Dīn Jahāndār Shāh was successful in the conflict and occupied the throne. Murshid Qulī Khān accepted the result of the battle, quickly paid allegiance to the new emperor, and sent the imperial revenues to the emperor at Delhi.[3] Then, when Murshid Qulī Khān might have hoped that his future was assured, Farrukh Siyar, the son of ʿAẓīm al-Shān, chose to enthrone himself at Patna and challenge Jahāndār Shāh.

Murshid Qulī Khān's quarrel with Farrukh Siyar

Farrukh Siyar's bid for the throne was a leap in the dark. He needed both men and money to support his cause.

---

1. Consultations, 25th March, 1712. 2. Ibid.
3. He sent 25 lakh of rupees to the emperor which on the way was captured and taken possession of by Sayyid ʿAbd Allāh Khān. (Ibratnāmah, f. 49a).

Most of those persons who had been elevated to high positions by his father ʿAẓīm al-Shān decided to keep themselves aloof.[1] After much difficulty, he won over the two Sayyid brothers, Ḥusain ʿAlī Khān, the deputy sūbahdār of Bihar and ʿAbd Allāh Khān, deputy sūbahdār of Allahabad to his cause, but the question of money posed a great problem. It was at this point that Farrukh Siyar quarrelled with Murshid Qulī Khān. Farrukh Siyar demanded the Imperial revenues of Bengal and Orissa from Murshid Qulī Khān, but the latter refused them on the ground that he was loyal to whichever prince of the House of Timur was on the throne and that Farrukh Siyar was as yet only a candidate for the throne of Delhi.[2] As money was urgently needed, Farrukh Siyar had no alternative but to send forces against Murshid Qulī Khān.

The friction between Farrukh Siyar and Murshid Qulī Khān continued for some time. Being deprived of men and money from Bengal where he had spent practically the whole of his life, Farrukh Siyar was greatly incensed and resolved to crush Murshid Qulī Khān. Both Salīm Allāh and Salīm record the proceedings of Farrukh Siyar against Murshid Qulī Khān in the following manner. Farrukh Siyar, they say, appointed Rashīd Khān, elder brother of

---

1. For details see Irvine: Later Mughals, Vol.I, pp.199-201.
2. T.B., f. 53; Riād, p. 267.

Afrāsiyāb Khān Mirzā Ajmirī to replace Murshid Qulī Khān in the province of Bengal.[1] Rashīd Khān set out with a large army for Bengal and entered it through the pass of Teliagarhi and Sikrigali. While Rashīd Khān proceeded towards Bengal and marched through the passes, Murshid Qulī Khān remained unmoved and made no preparation to stop his march. Besides the regular war establishment, Murshid Qulī Khān mobilised no extra troops. Rashīd Khān reached a point three kos distant from Murshid Qulī Khān and arrayed his troops for battle. Next morning Murshid Qulī Khān detached an army under Mīr Bangālī and Sayyid Anwar Jaunpūrī with 2,000 cavalry and infantry, while he himself remained busy with copying the Qurʾān, as was his daily routine. A battle ensued in the Karīmābād plain (near Murshidabad). Sayyid Anwar Jaunpūrī was killed and Mīr Bangālī asked for reinforcements. But Murshid Qulī Khān remained unmoved. At length, when he heard that Mīr Bangālī was retreating, he detached Muḥammad Jān,[2] faujdār of Murshidabad, to reinforce Mīr Bangālī. Subsequently, after finishing his own work, Murshid Qulī Khān recited

---

1. Rashīd Khān's appointment to replace Murshid Qulī Khān is also corroborated by Māʾthir-al-Umarā, Vol. III, p.752.
2. Riād has Muḥammad Khān, but Muḥammad Jān is correct. The English records refer to the faujdār of Murshidabad as Mahmud John, obviously a misspelling of Muḥammad Jān. (Cf. Consultations, 27th June, 1710).

the fātihā-i-khāir (benedictory prayer) and then came to the battlefield where he continued to chant the duā-i-saifī (prayer relating to the sword). The duā-i-saifī had such an effect that the sword unsheathed itself and through invisible help he vanquished the enemy. Rashīd Khān was defeated and Murshid Qulī Khān emerged triumphant.[1]

The English records throw rather more light on the subject. On 24th April, 1712, a report from Patna reached Calcutta that "Nabob Hossein Cawn [Nawāb Ḥusain ʿAlī Khān] is going from Patna by order of Furruckseer [Farrukh Siyar] to fetch Mussud Cooley Cawn and his treasure or his head."[2] But as Ḥusain ʿAlī Khān's attention was needed in Patna, the plan of sending him to Bengal was dropped,[3] and instead Farrukh Siyar detached an army under other generals. The Patna report says that Farrukh Siyar sent Timūr Beg with 1000 horse, Mirzā Jaʿfar with 250 horse, Mirzā Riḍā with 700 horse and Gāndhāra Singh with 1000 horse.[4] But on 13th June (1712) report reached Calcutta that the army sent by Farrukh Siyar against Murshid Qulī Khān had been defeated and Farrukh Siyar was sending a larger force of 5,000 horse under other able generals. Simultaneously, the king [Farrukh Siyar] hearing we are very strong in Calcutta and being fearful the duan [dīwān],

---

1. T.B., f. 54-57; Riād, pp. 269-72.
2. Consultations, 24th April, 1712.
3. Ibid., 13th May, 1712.
4. Ibid., 2nd May, 1712.

i.e. Murshid Quli Khan] will fly to us for protection, has sent us down a phirmaund [farman] and husbullhookum [hasb al-hukm], the contents of which phirmaund orders us to seize the duan and his treasure."[1] On 16th September, (1712) the Calcutta Council received the news "that upon Mirzacooly Cawne [misspelling of Mussud Cooly Cawne meaning Murshid Quli Khan] desire to be reconciled to the King [Farrukh Siyar] and that Ibrahim Hossein [Ibrahim Husain] might be sent to assure him of his favour, the king sent him to bring him the treasure or his head but he heard on his way that Mussudcooley Cawn had fought and killed Recede Cawn [Rashid Khan], and that Cawn Jewn Behawdur [Khan Jahan Bahadur] had secured the pass at Secregully [Sikrigali] and imprisoned one of the king's officers, so went no further, but desired him to send his son and nephew with his own forces, and he would endeavour to force that pass but upon advice that Prince Ezerdeen ['Azz al-Din] was on this side Agra, the king sent him order to return again with all his forces, saying he intended to march against the prince."[2]

The narratives of Salim Allah and Salim as summarised above suggest that Murshid Quli Khan was

---

1. Consultations, 13th June, 1712.
2. Ibid., 16th September, 1712.

successful in the battle through his piety and the efficacy of the duʿā-i-saifī. Their statement that Murshid Qulī Khān did not make any arrangement for defending himself is not correct. The English records show that he fortified Murshidabad and several outplaces soon after the death of Bahādur Shāh when he declared the accession of ʿAẓīm al-Shān.[1] Among modern scholars, Charles Stewart describes Murshid Qulī Khān's battle with Rashīd Khān simply following Gladwin's translation of Salīm Allāh's Tawārīkh-i-Bangālah.[2] Jadunath Sarkar seems to have utilised the English records but does not give any details.[3] A study of all the sources together, however, shows that Farrukh Siyar's attempt to take possession of the treasure of Bengal continued for about a year and that he made three unsuccessful attempts. He first resolved to send Sayyid Ḥusain ʿAlī Khān, but as the latter's attendance at Patna was found necessary, he was stopped; instead Farrukh Siyar sent four generals, Timūr Beg, Mirzā Jaʿfar, Mirzā Riḍāʾ, and Gāndhāra Singh. On the defeat of these generals by Murshid Qulī Khān in June, 1712, Farrukh Siyar sent Rashīd Khān with 5,000 soldiers. But by September, 1712, Rashīd Khān also had been defeated and killed. Farrukh Siyar now detached Ibrāhīm Ḥusain, but he found the passes

1. Consultations, 25th November, 1712.
2. Stewart: History of Bengal, p. 392.
3. H.B., II, p. 406.

blocked by Khān Jahān Bahādur, the deputy sūbahdār.[1] In spite of this, Ibrāhīm Ḥusain was determined to force the passes but events nearer the capital, i.e. the news of Prince ʿAzz al-Dīn's march from Agra against Farrukh Siyar, compelled the latter to recall Ibrāhīm Ḥusain. Thus Murshid Qulī Khān remained undisputed master in Bengal.

R.D. Banerjee charges Murshid Qulī Khān with having been a rebel and a traitor,[2] but as Jadunath Sarkar points out,[3] Murshid Qulī Khān acted quite properly in refusing the Bengal revenues to Farrukh Siyar, while he was still only a competitor for the throne. He rather proved that he was a loyal servant to whatever Timurid prince occupied the throne of Delhi. His loyalty is borne out by his attitude to Farrukh Siyar when the latter defeated Jahāndār Shāh and occupied the throne.

Murshid Qulī Khān under Farrukh Siyar

On Farrukh Siyar's accession to the throne (January, 1713), he distributed offices to his adherents and reappointed officials in the Bengal administration. Murshid Qulī Khān received a new title, that of Jafar

1. The action of Khān Jahān Bahādur is difficult to explain. The English records show that he was no friend of Murshid Quli Khān (Consultations, 25th November, 1712). It seems that he either received an imperial command to oppose Farrukh Siyar or he thought that if Murshid Qulī Khān was overthrown, his own position would be at stake.
2. R.D. Banerjee: History of Orissa, Vol. II, p.66.
3. H.B. II, p. 406.

Khān Nāṣirī[1] and was confirmed as dīwān of Bengal. He was also appointed dīwān and ṣūbahdār of Orissa and deputy to the emperor's infant son Farkhunda Bakht entitled Jahāngīr Shāh who was nominally appointed ṣūbahdār of Bengal.[2] After a few months, when the infant died, Mīr Jumlah was appointed the ṣūbahdār of Bengal in absentia, but Murshid Qulī Khān continued as deputy ṣūbahdār.[3]

The bestowal of favour by Farrukh Siyar on Murshid Qulī Khān calls for an explanation. On Farrukh Siyar's accession to the throne, the court politics in Delhi took a new turn, altogether different from those of the time of Bahādur Shāh.[4] The old imperial officers were displaced and various new adherents of the king, who had helped him in his claim to the throne, came to power. These new king-makers were divided among themselves. There were, on the one hand, the Sayyid brothers, to whose exertions Farrukh Siyar really owed his success, and on the other hand there were his friends like Khwājah ʿĀṣim (Khān-i-Daurān) and Sharīʿat Allāh (Mīr Jumlah), who now got title, rank and high offices. There were also

---

1. ʿIbratnāmah, f. 117b; The Consultations dated 22nd October, 1713 refer to Murshid Qulī Khān as "now Jaffer Cawne Neib Subah of Bengall".
2. ʿIbratnāmah, f. 117b.
3. Ibid; See also Irvine: Later Mughals, Vol. I, p. 262.
4. For details see Satish Chandra: Parties and Politics in the Mughal Empire 1707-1740, and Irvine: Later Mughals, Vol. I, pp. 258 ff.

the old Turānī nobles like Niẓām al-Mulk and Muḥammad Amīn Khān, who had a great following and who also influenced the politics at court. Murshid Qulī Khān is not known to have belonged to any of these parties. He had not helped Farrukh Siyar in the late war, but rather had withstood Farrukh Siyar's demand for the Bengal revenues, and had actually fought his generals, driving them back. He was no friend of the Sayyids, or at least there is nothing on record to associate him with them. He was not a Turānī, which party was led by Mīr Jumlah, whom Murshid Qulī Khān was representing in Bengal. He was also not strictly speaking an Irānī, because he was a renegade Indian-born Hindu. It is therefore difficult to explain how Murshid Qulī Khān was able to maintain his position. The answer may be found in Salīm Allāh and Salīm, who point out his regularity in sending the imperial revenues as responsible for his continuance in office. The emperor found him a neutral, loyal and conscientious civil servant. Secondly, he was not unknown to either the emperor or his chief counsellors. The emperor himself had been brought up in Bengal from the age of thirteen[1] and he had been for some time under Murshid Qulī Khān's control.[2]

---

1. Irvine: Later Mughals, Vol. I, p. 198.
2. See Supra, p.46

Mīr Jumlah, who was now elevated to the sūbahdārī of Bengal had spent part of his life in Jahāngīrnagar (Dacca) holding the office of qādī. Khwājah ʿĀṣim had also been in Bengal and Bihar as a playmate of Farrukh Siyar.[1] Thirdly, Murshid Qulī Khān's efficiency as a civil servant had already been tested. During the two wars of succession, he had proved himself to be efficient by maintaining peace in the area under his jurisdiction. During the second war of succession, although he himself had been involved in warfare against Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Khān and Farrukh Siyar, the country had enjoyed peace. The European traders suffered in Patna when Farrukh Siyar himself extorted money from them,[2] but to the satisfaction of all, Bengal remained peaceful. It was not unnatural, therefore, that Murshid Qulī Khān should have been confirmed in his position and his status raised under the new administration.

Suppression of Sītārām

The most important act of Murshid Qulī Khān (now Jaʿfar Khān) during this time was the suppression of the rebellion of Sītārām, zamīndār of Bhushna. Salīm Allāh and Salīm record the event as follows.[3] Sītārām,

---

1. Irvine: Later Mughals, Vol. I, pp. 265-66, 267-68.
2. Consultations, 24th April, 13th May, 23rd June, 7th July, 16th September, 1712.
3. T.B., f. 49-61; Riāḍ, pp. 263-64.

zamīndār of parganah Maḥmūdābād gathered a band of robbers[1] and with their help infested the woods and carried off cattle from the neighbouring country, but when pursued by the government troops took shelter in jungles and lakes. Abū Turāb, the faujdār of Bhushna, who was a Sayyid and related to the emperor's family, was not in a position to check Sītārām's depradations of the imperial territory. He tried to punish Sītārām, but the latter always successfully evaded the Mughal soldiers. At last Abū Turāb engaged one Pīr Khān, a commander of 200 horse, to pursue Sītārām. One day it so happened that while Pīr Khān was pursuing Sītārām, Abū Turāb also went to the jungle for hunting purposes. Sītārām's followers taking Abū Turāb for Pīr Khān, surrounded him and killed him. When Murshid Qulī Khān got intelligence of the murder of Abū Turāb he was alarmed and became apprehensive of the wrath of ʿĀlamgīr [correctly Farrukh Siyar] for withholding assistance to the faujdār. He appointed his own brother-in-law Bakhsh ʿAlī Khān[2] to the command with orders to seize Sītārām. Orders to assist Bakhsh ʿAlī Khān in the pursuit of Sītārām were also issued to the neighbouring zamīndārs threatening them with the

---

1. This is Salīm Allāh's statement. Salīm differs and says that Sītārām, having been sheltered by forests and rivers rebelled against the Mughal authority in Bengal.
2. Salīm writes Ḥasan ʿAlī Khān (Riāḍ, p. 264).

loss of their fortune, in case Sītārām escaped through lands under their jurisdiction. The zamīndārs accordingly hemmed in Sītārām from all sides till Bakhsh Alī Khān seized him, his family, children and accomplices and sent them in chains to Murshidabad. Murshid Qulī Khān ordered Sītārām to have his head enclosed in a raw cow-hide and after being impaled alive to be hung on a tree on the high road from Murshidabad to Dacca and Bhushna so that this might set an example to other zamīndārs. His wives, children and accomplices were ordered to suffer perpetual imprisonment at Mahmūdābād; his zamīndārī was given to Rāmjīvan and his property was confiscated.

The English records supply the following information. On 11th February, 1714, the Calcutta Council received a letter from the deputy faujdār of Hugli informing them that "the family of Seeteram late Jemeendaree of Boosna ly concealed in our town," with vast treasure and asking the Council to hand the fugitives over to the government. The Council were taken aback because they did not know anything about Sītārām's family. They called all the native servants, from whom it was learnt that the fugitives were there in Calcutta, but no one was willing to disclose their whereabouts. However, when a reward was offered of Rs. 100/- to the discoverer of Sītārām's

family, it was found that they were being concealed by Rāmnāth, the patwārī of the Company. "Two sons and a daughter, all small children, of Seeteram's, also six women of his family and four men servants" were found and made over to the deputy faujdār of Hugli on 5th March, 1714.[1]

These are the only contemporary or near contemporary sources referring to the history of Sītārām and they were followed by Charles Stewart and O'Malley.[2] Westland made a survey of Jessore towards the last quarter of the 19th century, gathered local traditions, and described the ruins of buildings attributed to Sītārām.[3] In the present century S.C. Mitra has taken much pains to collect the kulaji (genealogical) literature, traditions and folk songs, and to investigate the ruins of buildings and temples, and with their help Sītārām has been made a popular hero, the last Hindu king of Bengal, and his zamīndārī the last Hindu kingdom.[4] This view has been subscribed to by no less a scholar than the late Sir Jadunath Sarkar writing as late as 1948.[5]

While Salīm Allāh depicts Sītārām as a robber

1. Consultations, 11th Feb., 3rd, 4th, 5th & 7th March, 1714.
2. Stewart: History of Bengal, pp.382-83; L.S.S.O'Malley: Bengal District Gazetteers: Jessore, pp. 33-35.
3. J.Westland: A Report on the District of Jessore, its antiquities, its history and its commerce, pp. 25-38.
4. S.C. Mitra: Jasore-Khulnar Itihasa (History of Jessore and Khulna), part II.
5. H.B., II, p. 416.

chief, these later scholars depict him as the last popular Hindu king. The claim of both the groups of scholars seems to have been exaggerated. At present, it is not possible to lay a hand upon any piece of evidence relating to Sītārām that may be termed authentic except the Diary and Consultations of the English Council in Calcutta. But the English records supply only the dates when Sītārām's family took shelter in Calcutta and when they were made over to the deputy faujdār of Hugli. Westland and S.C. Mitra describe four inscriptions, three of which dated 1699, 1703 and 1704, commemorate the construction of temples by Sītārām.[1]

From the scanty materials at our disposal, it is difficult to reconstruct the history of the rise and fall of Sītārām. S.C. Mitra's genealogical table shows that Sītārām's father was a petty tax-gatherer under the faujdār of Bhushna. The dates in the inscriptions and English records suggest that Sītārām obtained the zamīndārī some time towards the end of the 17th century and that he was killed towards the end of 1713 or at the beginning of 1714. Salīm Allāh and Salīm's chronology in putting the event in the reign of ʿĀlamgīr is therefore wrong. The

---

1. J. Westland: Op.cit., pp. 32-38; S.C. Mitra: Op.cit., p. 542. Westland could examine only two inscriptions which were available in situ; for two others his informers supplied him with the text. If, however, in one inscription he could read the date 1703, other dates are not impossible. Neither Westland nor S.C. Mitra illustrate the inscriptions.

fortification of his residence indicates that he gathered a strong force under him. The fact that his zamīndārī was liable to Magh attacks from the south may have actuated him to organise this army. The construction of temples and excavation of tanks, that are still extant in ruins, suggest that he attended to the people's weal. If the folk songs and traditions that commemorate Sītārām are not later day fabrications, his popularity is proved beyong question. Salīm Allāh, therefore, does great injustice in branding Sītārām as no more than a robber chief. According to Salīm, Sītārām "being sheltered by forests and rivers had placed the hat of revolt on the head of vanity. Not submitting to the viceroy, he declined to meet the imperial officers and closed against the latter all the avenues of access to his tract."[1] This evidence, therefore, brands him as a rebel and this is probably the correct appreciation of Sītārām's position vis-a-vis the Mughal government.

It is difficult to explain the cause of Sītārām's rebellion. The date of his rebellion and suppression, however, coincides with the disturbances in the Mughal empire that followed the death of Bahādur Shāh. In Bengal though peace was maintained, Murshid Qulī Khān had to

---

1. Riād, pp. 263-64

face two enemies, Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān, the dispossessed faujdār of Hugli and Farrukh Siyar, the competitor for the throne of Delhi.[1] The date probably indicates that Sītārām took advantage of the preoccupations of Murshid Qulī Khān to rebel against him. Sītārām's strength may have lain in his popularity amongst his people. But it is probably too much to call him the last Hindu king or his zamīndārī the last Hindu kingdom of Bengal. That he was not very strong is suggested by the fact that he was easily suppressed.

Murshid Qulī Khān became Ṣūbahdār of Bengal

Murshid Qulī Khān continued to be the deputy ṣūbahdār of Bengal for about three years. In 1715, however, the party-politics in Delhi took a new turn. Considering that Mīr Jumlah, the absentee ṣūbahdār of Bengal, was their greatest enemy, the Sayyid brothers demanded his removal from the capital. Farrukh Siyar was obliged to accept the demand and Mīr Jumlah was granted the ṣūbahdārī of Bihar and sent to Patna.[2] In April, 1715 Mīr Jumlah proceeded to Patna at the head of a large army. He was never sincere in agreeing to live in an outlying province and sneaked back to Delhi shortly afterwards. In the

---

1. See supra, pp. 55-69, 74-80.
2. Muntakhab al-Lubāb, vol. II, p. 741.

meantime, he managed to get hold of the Bengal revenues which were being sent to Delhi and spent thirty lakh of rupees in paying the salaries of his soldiers.[1] When the emperor came to know of this misdemeanour on the part of Mīr Jumlah, he dismissed him from the sūbahdārī of Bengal and appointed Murshid Qulī Khān in his place. Murshid Qulī Khān sent his nazrānah (present) to the emperor, who in turn honoured him with the title of Mu'tamin al-Mulk 'Alā' al-Daulah Ja'far Khān Bahādur Nāṣirī Nāṣir Jang and raised his rank to seven thousand.[2] Murshid Qulī Khān thus at last became the highest officer in Bengal and Orissa both in name and in fact.

The exact date of the appointment of Murshid Qulī Khān to the sūbahdārī of Bengal is not available. Jadunath Sarkar puts it in 1717.[3] We do not know whence he got his information, but there is reason to believe that the date may be pushed back by one year. Mīr Jumlah who was appointed sūbahdār of Bengal after the death of the emperor's infant son, was dismissed in 1715-16.[4] There is no doubt that Murshid Qulī Khān was the sūbahdār of Bengal in 1717 when Farrukh Siyar granted his farmān

---

1. 'Ibratnāmah, f. 141a.
2. Mā'thir al-Umarā, Vol. III, p. 752; T.B., f. 39a.
3. H.B., p. 399.
4. Irvine: Later Mughals, Vol. I, pp. 330-32.

to the English. The farmān and many hasb al-hukms were addressed to Jaʿfar Khān [Murshid Qulī Khān] as ṣūbahdār of Bengal.[1] As there is no evidence to show that any other person was appointed or came to Bengal as ṣūbahdār between the dismissal of Mīr Jumlah and the appointment of Murshid Qulī Khān, if Murshid Qulī Khān was appointed in 1717 as stated by Jadunath Sarkar, it means that the ṣūbahdārī remained vacant for about a year. It was not unusual for a ṣūbahdārī to remain vacant, but there is probably an allusion in the ʿIbratnāmah of Mirzā Muḥammad to the appointment of Murshid Qulī Khān soon after the dismissal of Mīr Jumlah in 1715-16. Discussing the affair of Mīr Jumlah of the year 1128/A.D. 1715-16 Mirzā Muḥammad writes "When this affair [the news of Mīr Jumlah's appropriation of Bengal revenues] was reported to the emperor, he became extremely angry and the ṣūbahdārī of Bangālah which was bestowed upon him under the deputyship of Jaʿfar Khān was entrusted to Jaʿfar Khān. Mīr Jumlah, who recruited and gathered together all the persons [soldiers] depending on Bengal revenues, dismissed them on hearing this order."[2] If the portion underlined, which is found in the margin, is ommited, the passage means that the ṣūbahdārī was entrusted to Mīr Jumlah. But then, the passage becomes

---

1. I.O. Records : Home Miscellaneous Series, Vol. 630.
2. ʿIbratnāmah, f. 141a.

redundant, because it is difficult to understand how Farrukh Siyar became angry with Mīr Jumlah, and at the dame time entrusted him with the sūbahdārī. Secondly, Mīr Jumlah was appointed sūbahdār of Bengal long before in 1713 which has also been mentioned in the ʿIbratnāmah on an earlier occasion.[1] Thirdly, it is not clear why Mīr Jumlah should have disbanded his army on hearing this order of the emperor, if he was favoured with the sūbahdārī. The marginal portion, therefore, seems to be a correction by the author himself stating that Farrukh Siyar was angry with Mīr Jumlah and appointed Jaʿfar Khān (Murshid Qulī Khān) the sūbahdār of Bengal, in place of the dismissed sūbahdār, Mīr Jumlah.

In April, 1719, Farrukh Siyar was strangled by the Sayyid brothers, who placed on the throne Rafīʿal-Darajāt, son of Rafīʿal-Shān (son of Bahādur Shāh).[2] A Consultation of the English Council in Calcutta at this time reads, "The vizzier [vizier] being a declared enemy to Jaffer Cawn [Jaʿfar Khān i.e. Murshid Qulī Khān], the present subah [sūbahdār] of Bengal, gives us sufficient reason to believe that he must share the fate of his master the late King which has been already aimed at by orders sent to invite him to court with promise of greater

1. Ibid., f. 117b.
2. Irvine: Later Mughals, Vol. I, pp. 386-94.

preferment but he being thoroughly sensible of the treachery designed against him, has as often found excuses for his staying in Bengall, and 'tis the general opinion of all persons that he will defend himself where he now is till he is cut off."[1] The Consultation brings out two important points. It reveals that Murshid Qulī Khān was invited to Delhi with an offer of promotion but that he declined it. If it was a fact, though there is no other evidence in its support, it was probably during the time when Farrukh Siyar was making a frantic effort to collect adherents against the Sayyid brothers that the invitation was given. The English in Calcutta thought that the Sayyid brothers who were holding power in Delhi were enemies of Murshid Qulī Khān. But far from destroying Murshid Qulī Khān, the new administration under Emperor Rafī' al-Darajāt confirmed him in his government of Bengal and Orissa.[2] In the words of Salīm Allāh, "the people of Bengal were free from trouble out of the change of emperors, because Ja'far Khān cared for no one but ruled with absolute sway. During his government the country never suffered from any invasion.[3]

---

1. Consultations, 10th March, 1719.
2. English translation of a copy of emperor's farmān confirming Murshid Qulī Khān in Bengal and Orissa, is attached in the Diary and Consultations, following Consultations dated 19th March, 1719.
3. T.B., f. 59b.

Momentous changes were taking place in Delhi. Soon after his accession Emperor Rafī' al-Darajāt was deposed in favour of his elder brother Rafī' al-Daulah (June, 1719), but both the brothers died the same year. They were succeeded (in 1719) by Prince Raushan Akhtār, a grandson of Bahādur Shāh with the title of Muḥammad Shāh.[1] As soon as Murshid Qulī Khān heard of his accession to the throne, he sent presents and tribute to the new emperor and was in return confirmed in his position.[2] In 1720, peace was again disturbed in the capital by the emperor's final and successful attempt to overthrow the Sayyid brothers. Murshid Qulī Khān in Bengal apprehended lawlessness. A Consultation reads, "the Nabob is dayly [en] listing of men and making great preparations for what reason they cant learn, and that a jamatdar [jamādār] with a thousand horse was arrived from Pattna."[3] Great credit must be given to Murshid Qulī Khān that he could maintain peace in his provinces at a time when there was so much chaos and confusion in the imperial capital. Salim writes, "The people of Bengal were free from the troubles caused by revolutions in the kingly office because Jafar Khān ruled that province with great vigour."[4]

---

1. Irvine: Later Mughals, Vol. I, pp. 417-18, 430-31.
2. Riād, p. 276.
3. Consultations, 24th October, 1720.
4. Riād, p. 276.

Having been invested with the sūbahdārī of Bengal and Orissa and having withstood the confusion caused by the party-politics in the capital, Murshid Qulī Khān was at last in a position to devote undivided attention to the administration of the provinces. It is during the comparatively peaceful period of the reign of Muḥammad Shāh that he reformed the revenue-system of the provinces.[1] During this period, however, two cases of disturbance in Bengal are on record, the disturbance raised by two Afghāns and the depradations of the Maghs of Arakan in the coastal districts of the eastern frontier.

Disturbance of the two Afghāns

Salīm Allāh and Salim give the following account of the disturbance caused by the two Afghāns.[2] Shujāt Khān and Najāt /Najābat/ Khān, two Afghān zamīndārs of Tankī Sarubpūr in sarkār Maḥmūdābād committed highway robberies in their own area and made depredatory incursions into the neighbouring zamīndārīs. At length they were so emboldened that they seized 60,000 rupees of the imperial revenues on their way to Murshidabad. The zamīndārs of the area lodged complaints with Murshid Qulī Khān, who sent officers to make an inquiry on the spot. After he had received their

1. T.B., f. 61-62; Riād, pp. 279-80.
2. T.B., f. 61-62; Riād, pp. 279-80.

report, authenticated by the signature of the qānūngos and the revenue officials, Murshid Qulī Khān ordered Aḥsan Allāh Khān, the faujdār of Hugli, to apprehend the offenders. Aḥsan Allāh Khān, ostensibly marching out on a hunting expedition, surprised their stronghold, arrested and captured the two Afghāns with their followers, put them in chains and fetters, mutilated their hands and feet, tied them strongly and severly with pieces of stirrup-leather, and sent them to Murshid Qulī Khān. Murshid Qulī Khān confiscated their properties, transferred their zamīndārī to Rāmjīvan and condemned them to perpetual imprisonment. To recoup their plundered treasure, he levied a cess upon the neighbouring zamīndārs. No other source refers to the disturbance. Neither Salīm Allāh nor Salīm supply the date of this event. They mention the event after discussing the overthrow of Emperor Farrukh Siyar. If, therefore, they arrange events chronologically, the disturbance may be placed during Murshid Qulī Khān's sūbahdārī. Both the authors state that Aḥsan Allāh Khān, the faujdār of Hugli was sent to suppress the disturbers. The English records first refer to Aḥsan Allāh Khān as the faujdār of Hugli on 26th June, 1718.[1] This evidence also puts the event in the sūbahdārī of Murshid Qulī Khān. As for the cause

---

1. Consultations, 26th June, 1718.

of the disturbance, nothing more definite is known. The disturbers of the peace, Shujāʿat Khān and Najābat Khān, may have been petty zamīndārs or chiefs of robber-bands as suggested by Salīm Allāh and Salīm. They committed depredations in Tankī Sarubpūr, identified with modern Sarabpur,[1] about five miles from Jessore headquarters, but they were easily suppressed. The disturbance was of such minor importance that it did not attract the attention of the English Council in Calcutta, who make no reference to it.

Magh depredations

The first Magh depredations in Chittagong in Murshid Qulī Khān's day started in November, 1725. A letter from Edward Reynold, English factor at Jagdea dated 20th November, 1725 records that 30,000 Magh soldiers of Arakan had made a descent on Chittagong and had plundered the town. The disturbance spread to the neighbouring areas so that Reynold was compelled to leave Jagdea and take shelter in the English factory at Dacca.[2] At the same time next year (1726) the Maghs again came and began plundering. The English lost fifty per cent of their goods at Jagdea. The situation was so grave that the deputy nawāb of Dacca himself marched against the pirates.[3] No other

1. Riād, tr. p. 278, note 293.
2. Consultations, 29th November, 1725.
3. Ibid., 28th November, 1726. The Arakanese sources also refer to these Magh attacks (See A.P. Phayre: History of Burma, pp. 181-82).

depredation of the Maghs is on record till the death of Murshid Qulī Khān. After rigorously administering Bengal and Orissa for more than a quarter of a century, Murshid Qulī Khān died on the 30th June, 1727.[1]

Murshid Qulī Khān had no male issue. The sources mention only one daughter who was married to Shujā' al-Dīn Muḥammad Khān, probably before 1700. By this daughter, Murshid Qulī Khān had a grandson, named Mirzā Asad Allāh, whom he brought up in his palace from his boyhood. Before his death Murshid Qulī Khān took positive action to strengthen the position of his grandson. In 1720, he was appointed the dīwān of Bengal, after the death of Sayyid Raḍī Khān and entitled Sarfarāz Khān.[2] Keeping in view the law of escheat prevalent in the Mughal empire by which the effects of the Imperial officers reverted to the imperial treasury, Murshid Qulī Khān purchased out of his own savings the zamīndārī of Chunakhali (near Murshidabad) in the name of his grandson, gave it the name of khās táluq, and entered it as such in the revenue register.[3] Before his death he also requested the emperor to appoint his grandson Sarfarāz Khān as the ṣūbahdār in his place.[4]

---

1. Qasimbazar letter dated 30th June, 1727 reports his death. See Consultations, 3rd July, 1727.
2. T.B., f. 70a.
3. T.B., f. 58b.
4. Ibid.

In so doing, he tried to confirm the sūbahdārī to his own heir. But Shujā' al-Dīn Muḥammad Khān (his son-in-law and father of Sarfarāz Khān) nullified his plan both by receiving the imperial sanction appointing himself sūbahdār and by occupying the seat of government by force. On the advice of Murshid Qulī Khān's widow, Sarfarāz Khān thought it prudent to submit to his father and content himself with the dīwānī pending his succession after the death of his father.[1]

The narrative of Murshid Qulī Khān's career reveals some interesting points. Though he began his career in the Deccan, he came to the forefront in Bengal and Orissa. Beginning as the dīwān, he spent the best part of his career there, having filled various offices like the faujdārī of districts and the deputy sūbahdārī of the province and ultimately the highest office of all, in which he died at the pinnacle of his glory. During the whole of his career, he was the highest officer present in the provinces. Thus he was free to manage his affairs as he wished and was responsible only to the central government. Secondly, his rise was due to sheer merit and honesty, having no support of high ancestry or parties in the court. He remained loyal to whichever Timurid prince occupied the

---

1. Ibid., f. 71b.

throne, and never meddled in the wars of succession. Once he was removed from Bengal because of his earlier opposition to a prince, but the same prince was compelled to recall him, when the prince's own administrative arrangements had failed. At least once, loyalty drew him into war with an imperial competitor, knowing full well that the success of the latter might prove detrimental to his career. But his loyalty, honesty and efficiency stood him in good stead. His efficient management of the provinces and regular payment of the imperial revenues placed him in a favourable position in the eyes of the emperor, and whoever occupied the imperial throne, Murshid Qulī Khān's position and prestige remained undiminished. He maintained peace in his provinces: minor disturbances are on record, but they never proved serious. He thus proved himself a loyal and efficient civil servant till the day of his death.

Chapter III

ADMINISTRATION UNDER MURSHID QULĪ KHĀN

Having been the highest officer present in Bengal and Orissa practically throughout his career, Murshid Qulī Khān was primarily responsible for the administration of the provinces. The importance of that administration to the Mughal empire need hardly be emphasised. Though the central power of the Mughals in the headquarters was dwindling, the eastern provinces, notably Bengal and Orissa, enjoyed peace. The provinces remained loyal to the emperor and Murshid Qulī Khān regularly sent the imperial revenues to Delhi in spite of occasional revolutions in the capital. Though the empire was in a gradual process of decline, most of the outlying parts threatening to withold allegiance and revenues decreasing due to the Maratha incursions and the Rajput, Jat and Sikh risings, the revenues of Bengal and Orissa never diminished.

Provincial structure of the Mughal empire

The Mughals from Akbar onward introduced a well-defined and efficient administrative machinery for the provinces. Both the Āin-i-Akbarī and Akbarnāmah supply the titles of provincial officers with their duties and

functions. The head of the province was the governor, styled sipāh-sālār in the days of Akbar, and sūbahdār (or nāẓim) under his successors, but better known as nāẓim under Aurangzīb and the later Mughals. The English records call this officer both subah and nabob (nawāb).[1] He was the vicegerent of the sovereign in the province and was responsible for executive action, defence, criminal justice and general supervision of the province. Next, but in no way subordinate to the sūbahdār, was the dīwān, appointed by and responsible to the central government for revenue administration and civil justice.[2] These two officers shared responsibility for practically the whole administration of the province. They were assisted in their work by a number of other officers like the bakhshī, (the paymaster) the sadr (head of the religious department, charity and grant), the qādī (judge), the kotwāl (superintendent of police), the mīr-i-bahr (admiral) and the wāqiá-nawīs (the news-reporter).[3] Each province was divided into sarkārs and parganahs or mahals. The sarkār was both an administrative and revenue unit, headed by a faujdār in the executive and an ʿamalguzār or ʿāmil or bitikchī in the revenue departments. In the parganahs there were shiqdārs and amīns

1. c.f. Consultations, 29th September, 1709; 1st March, 1712; 2nd October, 1721.
2. P. Saran: The Provincial Government of the Mughals 1526-1658, p. 170
3. Ibid.

to deal with the executive and revenue functions respectively. There were also the qānūngos (literally the expounders of law but in practice the keepers of land-revenue registers) and the patwārīs (clerks or writers) attached to the parganahs, forming the lowest stratum of the revenue administration.[1]

The Mughal provincial administration may therefore be divided into two parts, the executive and revenue, the former looked after by the shiqdār in the parganah, the faujdār in the sarkār and finally headed by the sūbahdār in the province, and the latter, the revenue administration looked after by the patwārī, the qānūngo and the amīn in the parganah, the bitikchī, ʿāmil or ʿamalguzār in the sarkār and finally the dīwān in the province. The notable feature in the administration was that the executive and the revenue departments were kept independent of each other but at the same time made complementary the one to the other. A policy of check and balance was the guiding principle of the whole system. In the reign of Aurangzīb the policy was carried further by creating the post of ṣadr qānūngo in the province to work as a check to the growing power of the provincial dīwān in revenue affairs. There is probably truth in Salīm Allāh and Salīm's statements that the

---

1. P. Saran: Op.cit., pp. 170 ff.

provincial dīwān's accounts were not acceptable to the imperial court unless they were countersigned by the ṣadr qānūngo,[1] because otherwise the creation of the post of ṣadr qānūngo would have been pointless.

Officers in Bengal under Murshid Qulī Khān

During the first term of his office, until the death of Auranzīb in 1707, Murshid Qulī Khān was the dīwān of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. From 1710-1712 he was only the dīwān of Bengal but at the accession of Farrukh Siyar in 1713 he was raised to the deputy ṣūbahdārī of Bengal and ṣūbahdārī of Orissa in addition to his dīwānī of both the provinces. The real power of Murshid Qulī Khān began from this time, because the ṣūbahdār of Bengal had all along been absent and from 1715-16 Murshid Qulī Khān himself was appointed ṣūbahdār of Bengal in addition to his ṣūbahdārī of Orissa.

A complete list of the Mughal officers in Bengal during this time is not available. But the few names that are known and the list of officers in Hugli as found in

---

1. T.B., f. 42a; Riād, pp. 250-51. It is difficult to fix the origin of the post of ṣadr qānūngo though there is no doubt that the office did exist in Bengal as evidenced from the English records of the late 18th century. The earliest reference to the appointment of a ṣadr qānūngo is available from a farmān of Aurangzīb appointing the ṣadr qānūngo of Bihar. (Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Bombay session, 1958, pp. 431-35.)

the English records suggest that the pattern of administration was the same as has been mentioned above.[1] Apart from the sūbahdār, the most important executive officers were the sūbahdār's deputies in Orissa and Dacca and the faujdārs of sarkārs or districts. The deputyship of Orissa was conferred on Shujā' al-Dīn Muḥammad Khān, Murshid Qulī Khān's son-in-law. He held this post till the death of Murshid Qulī Khān, after which he came to occupy the sūbahdārī himself. The English records refer to the following three persons as deputies of Dacca: -

Khān Maundee (Muḥammad) 'Alī Khān[2] - - - - 1717
I'tiṣām Khān[3] - - - - - - - - - - -circa- - 1723-26
Son of I'tiṣām Khān[4] - - - - - - - - - - - - 1726-28[5]

A Dacca letter to the Calcutta Council suggests that both I'tiṣām Khān and his son were related to Murshid Qulī Khān,[6] but how near was the relationship cannot be determined. According to Salīm Allāh, Murshid Qulī Khān appointed

---

1. The following officers of Hugli were regular recipients of presents from the English: - faujdār (called governor in the English records), bakhshī, muftī, qādī, waqi'ā-nawīs, sawānih-nigār, akhbār-nawīs, dāroghah of bakhshbandar, dāroghah of nawwārah, mīr-i-bahr and khās-nawīs. c.f. Consultations, 2nd October, 1704, 1st Feb. 1714, 2nd November, 1717, 2nd November, 1724.
2. I.O. Records, Home Miscelleneous Series, Vol.630, contains an English translation of a parwānah, issued to this officer by Murshid Qulī Khān.
3. The Dacca letter to the Calcutta Council dated 9th March, 1726 reports his death. (See Consultations, 21st March 1726)
4. Consultations, 21st March, 1726. 5. Dacca letter dated 27th March, 1728 reports the arrival of the next officer. (Consultations, 15th April, 1728)
6. Consultations, 29th March, 1731.

Mirzā Luṭf Allāh as his deputy at Dacca with the title of Murshid Qulī Khān.[1] But the Dacca letter[2] shows that he arrived at Dacca in March, 1728, about eight months after the death of Murshid Qulī Khān. Salīm Allāh's statement is therefore incorrect.

Several names of the faujdārs are available. For example, Muḥammad Jān was the faujdār of Murshidabad (circa 1713 - November, 1720) and the commander of Murshid Qulī Khān's forces.[3] Muḥammad Taqī, son of Shujā'al-Dīn Muḥammad Khān (and uterine brother of Sarfarāj Khān, grandson of Murshid Qulī Khān) had been the faujdār of Balasore from about 1713 until 1734, when he died.[4] Saif Khān the faujdār of Purnea was appointed on the recommendation of Murshid Qulī Khān.[5] Of the faujdārs of Bhushna two names are available - Abū Turāb who died at the hands of Sītārām, the zamīndār[6] and Bakhsh 'Alī Khān, Murshid Qulī Khān's brother-in-law who was appointed after the murder of Abū Turāb.[7] Several names of the faujdārs of Hugli are given in the English records. They are as follows:[8]

---

1. T.B., f. 59a; Riād, p. 275.
2. Consultations, 15th April, 1728.
3. Consultations, 10th November, 1720.
4. H.B., II, pp. 423, 425.
5. T.B., f. 39b.
6. Supra, p.84.
7. Supra, p.84.
8. Consultations, 8th June, 1704; 27th February, 1710; 18th December, 1711; 10th September, 1713; 26th June,1718.

Mīr Ibrāhīm	circa 1704-1707
Muḥammad Riḍā	1707-1710
Ḍiya al-Dīn Khān	1710-1711
Walī Beg [deputy]	1711-1712
Mīr Abū Ṭālib	1712-1713
Mīr Nāṣir [deputy]	1713-1718
Mirzā Aḥsan Allāh	1718-1727

Of the officers in the revenue department, the dīwān was the highest officer in the province. Murshid Qulī Khān himself was the dīwān of the three provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa during his early career. It has been mentioned earlier that he was allowed to appoint his deputies in the provinces even during the reign of Aurangzīb at which time he appointed Sayyid Akram Khān his deputy in Bengal.[1] When Murshid Qulī Khān became the deputy sūbahdār in 1713, the same Sayyid Akram Khan was again appointed deputy dīwān, and after Murshid Qulī Khān's promotion to the sūbahdārī, the deputy dīwān was also promoted to be a full-fledged dīwān. After the death of Sayyid Akram Khān (some time after 1717),[2] Sayyid Raḍī Khān, husband of Murshid Qulī Khān's grand-daughter, was appointed dīwān.[3]

---

1. Supra, p.44
2. Some of the hasb al-hukms issued by the imperial court to the English in 1717 were addressed to Sayyid Akram Khān, the dīwān. I.O. Records: Home Miscellaneous Series, Vol. 630; Consultations, 23rd November, 1717.
3. T.B., f. 45b.

But the latter also died in 1720,[1] whereupon, on the recommendation of Murshid Qulī Khān, his grandson Mirzā Asad Allāh, was appointed dīwān with the title of Sarfarāz Khān.[2] Among other officials of the diwānī secretariat, Bhupat Rāī and Krishna Rāī deserve notice. According to Salīm Allāh, when Murshid Qulī Khān went to visit Aurangzīb in 1703, he brought with him these two efficient officers and appointed Bhupat Rāī as the secretary of the treasury and Krishna Rāī as his own secretary.[3] After the death of Bhupat Rāī, (some time after 1714[4]) Darpa Nārāyan, one of the ṣadr qānūngos was appointed to his post in addition to his qānūngoship.[5]

The ṣadr qānūngo played an important part in the revenue administration of the province, acting as a check to the power of the dīwān. Salīm Allāh and Salīm give the following story of Murshid Qulī Khān's relation with Darpa Nārāyan, one of the ṣadr qānūngos of Bengal during his time. The dīwān (Murshid Qulī Khān, then Kārṭalab Khān), de-

> signing to visit Aurangzīb (in 1703), drew up his accounts of receipts and disbursements. After completing the statements, he sent them to Darpa Nārāyan for his signature. Darpa Nārāyan demanded three lakh of rupees as his commission. The dīwān

1. Consultations, dated 3rd October, 1720 record his death.
2. T.B., f. 58b. 3. T.B., f. 30b.
4. English records refer to Bhupat Rāī till 18th January 1714 See Consultations, 18th January 1714.
5. T.B., f. 42a.

was willing to promise one lakh, to be paid on his return from the imperial court, but Darpa Nārāyan refused to sign unless he was paid in advance. Jai Nārāyan, the other ṣadr qānūngo, signed the accounts without any condition. After returning from the imperial court, the dīwān (now Murshid Qulī Khān) did not forget the refusal of Darpa Nārāyan to sign his accounts, but considering that Darpa Nārāyan was a great officer, appointed by the emperor himself, Murshid Qulī Khān was afraid of putting him to death without any crime. The dīwān consulted him on all important matters of revenue and so Darpa Nārāyan was made to feel secure. After the death of Bhupat Rāi, Murshid Qulī Khān conferred upon Darpa Nārāyan the office of the pīshkārī of khālisah (secretary of the department dealing with crown lands). Darpa Nārāyan thus gained the entire direction of all affairs relative to the revenue. Murshid Qulī Khān narrowly watched all his activities, hoping that by having thus extended his power Darpa Nārāyan would entangle himself in some way or other. But Darpa Nārāyan had a thorough knowledge of the finances of

Bengal and by minute investigation he made a settlement of land-revenue at one crore and fifty lakh of rupees which he realised from the khālisah. Darpa Nārāyan also curtailed the expenditure in all branches of administration and this helped Murshid Qulī Khān to send a larger amount of revenue to the imperial court than before. But by resuming the nānkars [subsistence allowance] of the zamīndārs and by realising high amounts of revenues, he incurred the displeasure of all. Murshid Qulī Khān charged Darpa Nārāyan with malversation and on pretence of scrutinising his accounts, kept him in close confinement and is accused of having starved him to death. On the death of Darpa Nārāyan his son Shiv Nārāyan received $\frac{10}{16}$ of the qānūngoship,[1] and the rest was received by Jai Nārāyan who had signed Murshid Qulī Khān's accounts without any condition.[2]

The story of Salīm Allāh has been accepted by Charles Stewart[3] almost verbatim, although it does not seem to be wholly correct. The English records show that

---

1. A ten anna share.
2. T.B., f. 42; Riād, pp. 250-51.
3. Charles Stewart: History of Bengal, pp. 372-74.

Bhupat Rāi was alive at least till 1714.[1] If Salīm Allāh is correct, Murshid Qulī Khān appointed Darpa Nārāyan in place of Bhupat Rāi some time after 1714. During the viceroyalty of Murshid Qulī Khān, Darpa Nārāyan is found to play an important part in Murshidabad, and on several occasions, the English represented their grievances to him instead of to the nawāb.[2] We also know for certain that Darpa Nārāyan died in the year 1723[3] at which time his servants were molesting the English at Makhdumpur. In reply to a representation against Darpa Nārāyan's people, Murshid Qulī Khān ordered the English to leave Makhdumpur and thus decided the matter in Darpa Nārāyan's favour.[4] If Salīm Allāh's story is correct, he would have us believe that Murshid Qulī Khān had borne a grudge against Darpa Nārāyan for twenty years, 1703-1723, which seems absurd. It is difficult to explain why Murshid Qulī Khān had waited for such a long time to punish Darpa Nārāyan, though from 1713 onward, Murshid Qulī Khān was at the height of his power. Secondly, the English records do not refer to the unnatural death of Darpa Nārāyan, rather they give an

---

1. Consultations, 18th January, 1714.
2. Cf. Consultations, 26th August, 1723.
3. Consultations, 22nd October, 1723, record Darpa Nārāyan's death.
4. See infra, p.288. That Darpa Nārāyan Qānūngo was the same as Darpa Nārāyan Zamīndār in whose favour Murshid Qulī Khān decided the case in 1723 is clear from Consultations, 26th August, 1723.

impression that he died at a time when he was in the full confidence of Murshid Qulī Khān. The fact that Murshid Qulī Khān asked the English to leave Makhdumpur, thus upholding Darpa Nārāyan's attitude does not suggest any other conclusion. On one point, however, Salīm Allāh, Salīm and the English records agree that Murshid Qulī Khān elevated the position of Darpa Nārāyan. It seems probable that Murshid Qulī Khān raised him as a deliberate policy to win him over to his side, because Darpa Nārāyan, having been the sadr qānūngo was in a position to act in a manner prejudicial to the nawāb. Much of the credit given to Murshid Qulī Khān for his revenue settlement, which will be discussed presently, may have been also due to the experience of Darpa Nārāyan.

From the foregoing discussion it is apparent that the whole administration centred round Murshid Qulī Khān and that he was surrounded by a band of officers, loyal and submissive to him, either from their relationship by blood or marriage or from their grateful acknowledgement of the debt they owed to the nawāb for their very elevation. All the keyposts, the deputy sūbahdārī in Orissa and Dacca and the dīwānī of Bengal were held by his relatives. Among the faujdārs, those of Balasore and Bhushna, Muḥammad Taqī

and Bakhsh ʿAlī Khān were also his relatives. The faujdār of Purnea was appointed at his recommendation and Salīm Allāh draws a picture of very cordial relationship between them.[1] Among the faujdārs of Hugli, Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān was dismissed at Murshid Qulī Khān's representation. If Salīm Allāh is to be believed, Abū Turāb, the faujdār of Bhushna could not hold his ground against Sītārām, because Murshid Qulī Khān did not reinforce him.[2] It is said that Muḥammad Jān, the faujdār of Murshidabad, and Mirzā Aḥsan Allāh, faujdār of Hugli, were the favourite officers of Murshid Qulī Khān.[3] As for two other faujdārs of Hugli, Walī Beg and Mīr Nāṣir, the English records state that they were deputies of Murshid Qulī Khān. The ṣadr qānūngos, who were independent of the dīwān or the ṣūbahdār, because of their appointment by the central government and of their office being hereditary, were also won over by adding to their powers and functions. It may therefore be concluded that taking advantage of the gradual decline of the Mughal power after the death of Aurangzīb, Murshid Qulī Khān brought the whole provincial administration under his personal control. The position becomes clear if we remember that it was Murshid Qulī Khān, the ṣūbahdār, who denied the English

1. T.B., f. 39-41.
2. Ibid., f. 49b.
3. T.B., f. 51a, 68b.; cf. Consultations, 10th November, 1720, 5th June, 1721.

the privilege of the free use of the mint and the privilege of renting 38 more villages round about Calcutta towns,[1] although the subject was under the dīwān's jurisdiction. Furthermore, till his death in 1727, Murshid Qulī Khān took upon himself the responsibility for sending the imperial revenues to the court,[2] although since 1716 he was no longer the dīwān. After 1720 this may be explained as his acting on behalf of his inexperienced grandson Sarfarāz Khān, who was appointed dīwān on his own recommendation, but the fact that Murshid Qulī Khān concerned himself with the imperial revenues throughout his career, and that the office of dīwān was kept confined to his relatives suggest that he deliberately concentrated powers into his own hands.

Another notable feature of the administration during this period is the preponderance of Hindu subordinate officers. Although the higher offices were filled by the Muslims and mainly by Murshid Qulī Khān's relatives, the great bulk of the officers, especially in the revenue department, were all Hindus. Thus the English records refer to Lahori Mall,[3] Mṛityunjaya[4] and Raghunandan,[5]

1. Infra, pp.267-271
2. This is evident from the Consultations of the Calcutta Council cf. Consultations, 5th June 1721, 3rd May 1725, 6th June 1726. 3. Consultations, 7th April 1712, 29th August, 1713.
4. Ibid., 26th May, 26th June, 7th July, 12th July, 1718.
5. Ibid., 10th December, 1716.

as officers responsible for the collection of revenues. Raghunandan was also the dāroghah of the mint[1] and his influence was so great that through his machinations his brother Rāmjīvan obtained great zamīndārīs in Rajshahi and Bhushna.[2] All the krorīs who received revenues for the Calcutta towns from the English were Hindus.[3] All the qānūngos whose names appear in the Qānūngo Report of 1787 were Hindus.[4] As the office of qānūngo was hereditary, it may be assumed that the early 18th century qānūngos, and in fact all the qānūngos in the Muslim period, were Hindus. Necessarily, therefore, the administration received the co-operation and goodwill of the bulk of the Hindu population. Surrounded by loyal officers and receiving the co-operation of the Hindus, it is no wonder that Murshid Qulī Khān maintained peace from both internal and external dangers.

Judicial Administration

Not much information is available about the judicial administration of the province. Muḥammad Sharaf was the provincial qādī of Bengal during the reign of Aurangzīb.[5] The qādī of Hugli figures prominently in the

---

1. Ibid., 18th July, 1717.
2. T.B., f. 38a, 51b; H.B. II, p. 414.
3. The names of krorīs who received revenues are available in the Consultations, and all of them were Hindus.
4. "Report on the office of Kanungo" by J.D. Pearson, published by R.B. Ramsbotham in Studies in the Land Revenue history of Bengal.
5. T.B., f. 67b.

records of the English Company as a recipient of presents.[1] Murshid Qulī Khān, as ṣūbahdār, was the head of the criminal justice in the province. According to Salīm Allāh, Murshid Qulī Khān was extremely just, so much so that he killed his own son on a call of justice.[2] He protected the weak from the clutches of the strong and during his government, the poor were secured from injustice and oppression. Such was the dread of his justice that the zamīndārs and ʿāmils rarely oppressed the peasants. It is said that the wakīls of the zamīndārs and ʿāmils were continually in search of complainants, and whenever they met with any who had cause to be dissatisfied, they used all means to pacify them. If it happened that a well-founded complaint reached the ear of Murshid Qulī Khān, the offender was sure to suffer severely.[3] If any officer of the judiciary neglected to redress the grievances of even the meanest person, whether from partiality or the high rank of the offender, upon representation from the aggrieved man, Murshid Qulī Khān decided the case himself. In his decisions, he showed neither affection, nor partiality for anyone, the rich and the poor being of equal value in his sight.[4] Salīm Allāh gives an example of Murshid Qulī Khān's action against

---

1. Cf. Consultations, 2nd October, 1704.
2. T.B., f. 25b.
3. Ibid., f. 67a.
4. Ibid., f. 68b.

Imām al-Dīn, a kotwāl of Hugli. The kotwāl had forcibly taken away a young girl of a Mughal merchant. Aḥsan Allāh Khān, the faujdār of the place took no notice of the offence because of his partiality to the kotwāl. When the father of the girl took the case to Murshid Qulī Khān, the latter ordered that the offender should be stoned to death in conformity with the Islamic law. The entreaties of the faujdār on behalf of the kotwāl could not move Murshid Qulī Khān and the sentence was actually executed.[1]

Salīm Allāh also relates how Qāḍī Muḥammad Sharaf executed Bṛindāban, a Hindu ṭaluqdār, for maltreating a Muslim faqīr. The story may be summarised as follows: - The faqīr asked charity from Bṛindāban, but the latter being displeased at the faqīr's manner, turned him out of his house. The faqīr collected bricks and built a wall in Bṛindāban's road which he gave the name of mosque and from there called the ādhān (call for prayer). Whenever Bṛindāban passed that way, the faqīr used to call the ādhān and this so much vexed Bṛindāban, that he one day threw down the wall, abused the faqīr and drove him away. The faqīr complained to Murshid Qulī Khān and Qāḍī Muḥammad Sharaf, in an assembly of men learned in the law, sentenced Bṛindāban to death. Murshid Qulī Khān was unwilling to

---

1. T.B. f. 68b.

take Bṛindāban's life and asked the qāḍī whether there was any means to evade the strict letter of the law so that the life of the poor Hindu might be spared. The qāḍī replied that his life might be spared just so long as was required to put anyone interceding for him to death. All the entreaties of Murshid Qulī Khān failed, Even ʿAẓīm al-Shān intervened in the matter and referred the case to the emperor for his mercy. But in the meantime the qāḍī killed Bṛindāban with an arrow from his own hand. After the execution of Bṛindāban, ʿAẓīm al-Shān wrote to the emperor that Qāḍī Muḥammad Sharaf had killed Bṛindāban in a fit of insanity. But Aurangzīb approved the action of the qāḍī saying, "Qāḍī Sharaf is on the side of God". After the death of Aurangzīb, Qāḍī Sharaf resigned his post and left for Delhi.[1]

The stories r̥ad like pious legends. It was, however, not improbable for a qāḍī to pronounce a sentence of death on a Hindu for maltreating a Muslim faqīr. But the event must have taken place before Murshid Qulī Khān became the sūbahdār. If it is true that Murshid Qulī Khān tried to spare the life of Bṛindāban, it suggests that in the matter of justice he made no distinction between a Hindu and a Muslim.

T.B., f. 68a.

Measures of internal peace

It has been seen that Murshid Qulī Khān maintained peace in the provinces of Bengal and Orissa even during the wars of succession. Salīm Allāh gives some idea of his measures aimed at giving the people security from highway robbery. His measures against robbers and thieves were extremely harsh. If a robbery was committed, Murshid Qulī Khān obliged the faujdārs and zamīndārs of the area wherein the crime was committed to discover the thief and recover the stolen goods. The goods or their equivalent were given back to the person robbed and the thief was impaled alive. As a sort of permanent measure to secure peace, he established thānahs (police posts) in different parts of the country and Salīm Allāh gives the names of three such thānahs established by Murshid Qulī Khān, viz. those of Katua, Murshidganj and Pobthel, all on the Burdwan road. Muḥammad Jān, who was appointed commander of the thānahs, was so strict against highway robbery that he always had the robbers split into two and was thus nicknamed Kulhāra or the axe.[1]

Salīm Allāh also records how Murshid Qulī Khān tried to maintain the standard price of grain, thus ameliorating the distress of the poor. He always provided against famine and severely prohibited monopolies of grain;

1. T.B., f. 62b.

if he found any imposition of high prices, the offenders were imprisoned. If the grain brought to the market for sale fell short of what was usual, he used to send officers to break open the hoards of individuals and carry them to the market. He also prohibited the export of grain (possibly in years of scarcity only) and the faujdār of Hugli had express orders to see that no ship, European or otherwise, was suffered to carry away more grain than was sufficient for provision of the crews during their intended voyage. He also prohibited merchants from hoarding grain.[1]

Revenue reforms

The Mughal revenue administration was aimed at achieving the twin purpose of realising as much revenues from the lands as possible and at the same time making the

---

1. Ibid., f. 65b. That Murshid Qulī Khān prohibited the the export of grain is corroborated by a Consultation dated 12th June, 1727. It is stated that Murshid Qulī Khān ordered his officers to prevent the Europeans from trading in grain. The date suggests that the order was passed during the end of his career. In view of the fact that rice was always exported from Bengal (see infra, p.353), it seems that the prohibition was in force only in times of scarcity.

peasants content so that they might prosper and bring more and more lands under plough. These principles, first initiated by Akbar, were continued by his successors and may be discerned from the farmāns of Aurangzīb.[1] The system introduced by Akbar included the assessment of the revenues after actual measurement of lands and their classification and the fixing of the revenue at one third of the gross produce realised either in cash or in kind. The total area of the empire was again divided into khālisah and jāgīr. The system in its broader sense continued under Akbar's successors though it is difficult to ascertain whether the working of the details was uniform in all the provinces or always conformed to the main principle.[2]

A Mughal revenue administration in Bengal also began from the time of Akbar, but it is difficult to obtain a clear picture. The most important account is found in the Āīn-i-Akbarī where Abū'l-Faḍl has given a table dividing the sūbah into sarkārs and mahals with their revenues in dāms,[3] better known as Todar Mal's settlement of 1582. Modern scholars have rightly shown[4] that Todar Mal's settlement in Bengal cannot be regarded as anything

---

1. Published by Jadunath Sarkar in Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1906, pp. 223-256.
2. W.H. Moreland: Agrarian System of Moslem India, pp. 122-123
3. Copper coins of Akbar's time, forty of them making a rupee
4. Cf. W.H. Moreland: Agrarian System of Moslem India, p. 196.

better than summary in nature, based on old records, because in 1582 and throughout the reign of Akbar, a major part of the province of Bengal remained outside the pale of the Mughal empire. But Todar Mal's summary valuation formed a basis for all future revenue officers when the whole province was consolidated. After the consolidation of the province in the reign of Jahāngīr, the revenue officers had to adjust the valuation and the settlement according as the situation demanded. Thus there are found khālisah lands directly administered by the government either through the revenue officers or through the revenue farmers called mustajirs. There were also the jāgīr lands assigned to officers as personal jāgīr or for the maintenance of soldiers or for some specific purpose such as the maintenance of naval equipment. There were also the lands granted to the zamīndārs, usually when they accepted vassalage in course of consolidation of the territory. The zamīndārs were allowed to pay a pīshkash or tribute, apparently an accepted lump-sum amount. While in the case of the khālisah and jāgīr lands, there were some cases of assessment by measurement or crop-estimation, there was apparently no assessment of zamīndārī lands. Apart from the land revenues, there were also the duties known generally as sāir, imposed on various articles

of merchanise and on shops.[1] Though in Jahāngīr's reign the Mughal revenue administration actually worked in the province in all its details, the exact amount of the assessed revenues, valuation or demand, is not known, because no revenue documents exist now. It is also not known how far the revenue officers were able to improve upon the valuation made by Todar Mal in 1582. James Grant refers to another settlement made by Shāh Shujā' in 1658.[2] He published the following figures of this settlement: -

Original rent-roll of Akbar's time, or the settlement of Todar Mal, 1582		Rs. 63,44,260
Increase on above		Rs. 9,87,162
Annexation of new dominion or sources of revenue		Rs. 14,35,593
	Total	Rs. 87,67,015
Jāgīr lands		Rs. 43,48,892
	Total	Rs.1,31,15,907

The figures show an increment of revenues of 15½% over and above the settlement of Todar Mal. Much of the increase was derived from territories annexed during

1. T.K. Raychaudhuri: Bengal under Akbar and Jahangir, pp. 24ff.
2. James Grant: Analysis of the Finances of Bengal in Fifth Report, Appendix 4, pp. 182-186

the intervening period of seventy six years. As in the previous settlement of Todar Mal, in this also the land was divided into khāliṣah and jāgīr, the sāir duties were included in either of the two categories, while the mint-duties were shown separately. In the case of Bishnupur, Pachet and Chandrakona on the western frontier of Sarkār Mandaran, being part of the jungle country of Jharkhand, the revenues represented the pīshkash or fixed tribute. What became of other pīshkash paying zamīndārs or vassals of the reign of Jahāngīr[1] is not known. Probably, owing to their continued vassalage, the zamīndārs lost their power and so the reason why they were originally allowed to pay pīshkash without subjecting their lands to assessment disappeared by the time of Shāh Shujā'. No other settlement of revenues in Bengal in the 17th century is on record, so that when Murshid Qulī Khān took over the dīwānī in 1700 he presumably inherited the settlement of Shāh Shujā' of 1658.

Adequate materials are not available to allow a detailed analysis of Murshid Qulī Khān's revenue settlement. In fact, we have to depend mainly upon Salīm Allāh's Tawārīkh-i-Bangālah and James Grant's Analysis of the Finances of Bengal. Salīm Allāh's references are clear

---

1. For a discussion on the subject see T.K. Raychaudhuri: Bengal under Akbar and Jahangir, pp. 24 ff.

but insufficient, while the revenue-figures quoted and claimed to be authentic by James Grant cannot be verified at present owing to the total loss of documents utilised by him.

Salīm Allāh's references to Murshid Qulī Khān's revenue system may be grouped as follows: -

(a) "Detaching the chaklah of Medinipūr from the sūbah of Orissa, he attached it to Bengal. He sent for the zamīndārs of the sūbah and ordered them to confinement. After examining and taking agreement and bond, he appointed an experienced, trustworthy and well-acquainted Bengali ʿāmil in each mahal, chaklah by chaklah to collect the revenues and outstanding dues. He curtailed the influence of the zamīndārs upon the receipt and disbursement of the revenues. The above mentioned ʿāmils sent shiqdārs, amīns, kārkūns and surveyors to each parganah and [with their help] measured the cultivated and fallow lands, village by village, plot by plot and raʿyat [holding] by raʿyat [holding] and thus completeda settlement. They also gave taqawī [agricultural loans] for seeds to the poor raʿyats. After great exertions to increase culti-

vation and to increase production, an increment of revenues in each mahal was obtained. After preparing a comparative statement of the past and present revenue [hast wa būd], a draft schedule of income, section by section was brought to hand. After stopping the excess expenditure of the zamīndārs [i.e. the excessive share in the collection], they were given nānkar for mere subsistence. The increased land-revenue, sāir taxes [deriving from] the increase in agricultural produce and curtailed expenditure, were all brought to the account of the imperial revenues".[1]

(b) He inspected the daily collection and disbursement of revenues and signed the ledger daily. At the end of every month, he collected the revenues according to the standard rates and if the dues were not paid in full, the defaulting zamīndārs and ʿāmils, qānūngos and mutaṣaddīs were required to remain in duress in the dīwānī office. The defaulters were not allowed to take food or drink or even to respond to the call of nature. They were confined inthis manner week after week and sometimes they were suspended with

1. T.B. f. 31a.

heads downwards and whipped and beaten. Those who did not pay even after such punishment were converted to Islam with their wives and children. Murshid Qulī Khān appointed none but Bengali Hindus in charge of revenue and sāir duties because it was easy to realise the dues from them.[1]

(c) The collection was completed in the month of Chait (the last month of the Bengali year corresponding to March - April) and Murshid Qulī Khān held the punya (celebrating the end of the year accounts) on the first day of Baiśākh (the first month of the Bengali year corresponding to April - May) and thereafter despatched the imperial revenues to Delhi to the tune of one crore and three lakh rupees. The cesses called abwāb-i-khāṣnawīsī were sent separately.[2]

(d) Speaking of the capability of Darpa Nārāyan Qānūngo Salīm Allāh states that the qānūngo increased the revenue of the khāliṣah to Rs. one crore and fifty lakh.[3]

(e) Speaking of the Rajas of Tippera, Kuchbihar and Assam, the author says that these Rajas sent

1. T.B., f. 36-37.
2. Ibid., f. 38a. The word "abwāb-i-khāṣnawīsī" means the commission for the clerks of the dīwānī department. It was a cess introduced by Murshid Qulī Khān, merely to enhance the revenues.
3. Ibid., f. 42b.

tribute to Murshid Qulī Khān.[1]

(f) About the zamīndārs of Birbhum and Bishnupur, the author states that Murshid Qulī Khān did not subject these zamīndārīs to survey, because Asad Allāh, the zamīndār of Birbhum was pious and granted lands for religious purpose, while the zamīndārī of Bishnupur was inaccessible, being surrounded by jungles.[2]

(g) One of the dīwāns, Sayyid Raḍī Khān was very strict in the collection of revenue. He invented ingenious methods of oppressing defaulters. He prepared a reservoir full of filth and, as in the language of the Hindus paradise was called vaikunṭh, Sayyid Raḍī Khān sneeringly named his reservoir vaikunṭh and the defaulting zamīndārs and ʿāmils were thrust into it.[3]

Salīm's account of the revenue reform of Murshid Qulī Khān is just a copy of Salīm Allāh. James Grant, however, gives some more details with figures of revenue, which may be summarised as follows: —[4]

Khālisah lands according to Shāh		Amount of Revenues
Shujāʿ's settlement	Rs.	87,67,015
Increase on above	Rs.	11,72,279
	Rs.	99,39,294

1. Ibid., f. 36a. 2. Ibid., f. 31b. 3. Ibid., f.45b.
4. Fifth Report, Appendix 4, pp. 189-191

	Amount of Revenues
	Rs. 99,39,294
Transferred from jāgīr to khālisah	Rs. 10,21,415
Jāgīr lands	Rs. 33,27,477
Total	Rs. 1,42,88,186

In Grant's detailed analysis of this settlement, the province has been divided into 13 chaklahs[1] and 1660 parganahs. Grant also discusses another settlement made by Shujā' al-Dīn Muḥammad Khān in 1728, said to be merely an official correction of that of Murshid Qulī Khān, in which the khālisah lands have been divided into 25 large collecting divisions called ihtimām, and various scattered zamīndārīs called mazkūrī. The jāgīr lands in 1728 were divided as follows: -

1. Jāgīr-i-sarkār-i-'ālā or viceroyal establishment
2. Jāgīr-i-bandah-i-'ālī dargāh or dīwānī establishment
3. Jāgīr-i-amīr al-umarā, bakhshī
4. Jāgīr of faujdārs
5. Jāgīr of mansabdārs
6. Jāgīr of zamīndārs

---

1. The names of the chaklahs are 1. Bandar Balasore, 2. Hijilee, 3. Murshidabad, 4. Burdwan, 5. Hugli or Satgaon, 6. Bhushah, 7. Jessore, 8. Akbarnagar /Rajmahal/, 9. Ghoraghat, 10. Kuribari, 11. Jahāngīrnagar /Dacca/, 12. Sylhet, 13. Islāmābād,/Chittagong/.

7. Madad-i-māsh (rent-free subsistence allowance)
8. Sāliana-dāran (petty zamīndārī allowance)
9. Al-tamgah (endowments)
10. Ruzinadārān (petty religious endowments)
11. Nawwārah (naval establishment)
12. Ámlah-i-ashām (maintenance of eastern frontier force)
13. Khedā (catching elephants)

A comparative study of Salīm Allāh and Grant shows that there is no detailed agreement between the two writers though the difference is not very wide. While Salīm Allāh states the amount of revenues in approximate round figures, probably because no document was available to him, Grant gives the figures even in fractions of a rupee and claims that they are based on original Persian documents. According to Salīm Allāh, Darpa Nārāyan increased the khālisah revenues to Rs. one crore and fifty lakh. This is obviously an exaggeration, because he himself states on more than one occasion that the amount of revenues sent to Delhi every year was Rs. one crore and three lakh.[1] As a rule, the entire khālisah revenues were required to be sent to Delhi. It seems, therefore, that Rs. one crore and fifty lakh of Salīm Allāh's description represented the entire revenue of the province and not the khālisah alone.

---

1. T.B., f. 38 a, 46a.

Judged from this standpoint, Salīm Allāh's figure of the entire revenue comes nearer to Grant's figure of Rs. 1,42,88,185. Jadunath Sarkar quotes a sentence from Salīm Allāh stating that Murshid Qulī Khān increased the Bengal revenues from Rs. one crore thirty lakh to Rs. one crore fifty lakh.[1] The sentence is not available in the manuscript I have consulted. But if it occurs in Sarkar's manuscript, and if it is genuine and not an interpolation, it means that Salīm Allāh almost corroborates the figures of Grant according to whom the revenues were increased from Rs. 1,31,15,907 to Rs. 1,42,88,185. Grant's figure of the khālisah revenue of Rs. 1,09,60,709 is also almost corroborated by Salīm Allāh's evidence that Murshid Qulī Khān regularly despatched the revenues to Delhi at the rate of Rs. one crore and three lakh per year. That there was a Kuribari chaklah consisting of Kuchbihar and Assam, as included by Grant in Murshid Qulī Khān's settlement also finds support in Salīm Allāh who states that the Rajas of these places sent tribute to Murshid Qulī Khān. It must be remembered, however, that Salīm Allāh writing in 1763 was probably no better authority than Grant, because the historian does not seem to have had access to any revenue document of Murshid Qulī Khān's time, such as Grant claims to have had. But other works like

---

1. H.B. II, p. 412.

Dastūr al-Ámal and Chahār Gulshan also supply revenue figures very close and sometimes almost identical to those supplied by Grant. One copy of Dastūr al-Ámal[1] for example, records the Bengal revenues at 52,46,36,240 dāms or Rs. 1,31,15,906. Edward Thomas informs us that in two copies of Dastūr al-Ámals he consulted, the revenues are recorded at Rs. 1,31,15,906, while in the third Rs. 1,31,15,903.[2] The European writer John Harris, who compiled his book on the basis of the writings of the early European travellers also puts the Bengal revenues in the reign of Aurangzīb at Rs. 1,31,15,906.[3] The Chahār Gulshan[4] records the revenues of 1720 or thereabouts at Rs. 1,40,72,725. All these sources therefore corroborate Grant's figures showing the Bengal revenues at Rs. 1,31,15,907 in the later years of the reign of Aurangzīb (or according to the settlement of Shāh Shujā'). To make the point clear, we may prepare the following table showing the figures in all these sources.

---

1. I.O. Ms. No. 1387, f. 7a.
2. E. Thomas: The Revenue Resources of the Mughal Empire in India, pp. 42-43.
3. J. Harris: Navigantium atque Itinerantium Bibliothica: or, A Complete Collection of voyages and Travels, Vol. I, p. 651.
4. Chahār Gulshan, translated by Jadunath Sarkar in India of Aurangzib, p. xxxii and 133.

		Bengal revenues in the reign of Aurang-zīb or according to the settlement of Shāh Shujā'.	Bengal revenues according to Murshid Qulī Khān's settlement.
(a)	James Grant	Rs. 1,31,15,907	Rs. 1,42,88,185
(b)	Dastūr al-'Amal I.O.Ms. The same as MS. A. of Thomas	Rs. 1,31,15,906	x
(c)	Dastūr al-'Amal Ms. B. of Thomas	Rs. 1,31,15,906	x
(d)	Dastūr al-'Amal Ms. C. of Thomas	Rs. 1,31,15,903	x
(e)	Chahār Gulshan 1720 ?	x	Rs. 1,40,72,725
(f)	J. Harris	Rs. 1,31,15,906	x

Grant's figures show that in Murshid Qulī Khān's settlement, some of the jāgīrs were resumed into the khālisah, thus reducing the revenue in the jāgīr lands and correspondingly augmenting the khālisah revenues. Whether this had any connection with the imperial vizier Niẓām al-Mulk's scheme of redistributing the jāgīr lands and of reducing the drain upon the imperial revenues by cutting the salaries of officials, is worth consideration. It is said that the emperor gave his assent to the scheme but in reality he shelved the matter for an indefinite period.[1] The English Council in Calcutta, however, records a report

---

1. Satish Chandra: Op.cit., pp. 174-75.

from Qasimbazar that "they hear the vizier has reduced the allowance of all the Omrahs at Court and turned out a great many, and that Jaffer Cawne's allowances are reduced from seven thousand munsub to five thousand, and the duans in proportion".[1] Whether Niẓām al-Mulk's scheme was actually put into operation is not known, but such a reduction would explain the small figure of revenues of the jāgīr lands supplied by James Grant. To sum up the discussion: there seems little room to doubt that Murshid Qulī Khān made a fresh settlement of the revenues culminating in the year 1722. (The Calcutta Council probably alludes to this settlement when they record in 1722 that "Jaffer Cawn is tearing the country to pieces for money".[2]) ✓There seems little doubt too that Grant's figures give a correct picture of the total effect of his new settlement. Some important points concerning the settlement of Murshid Qulī Khān, however, remain to be explained.

The first of these is whether the basis of settlement was raʼyatwārī or zamīndārī. Salīm Allāh gives the impression that the settlement was raʼyatwārī and that it was so thorough that Murshid Qulī Khān actually obtained information of the capability of each husbandman to pay. To obtain such detailed information, he ordered the

---

1. Consultations, 16th April, 1722.
2. Ibid.

zamīndārs into close confinement so that his trustworthy officers could operate the survey without any let or hindrance. The corrected assessment of Shujā' al-Dīn Muḥammad Khān of 1728 shows, however, that both big and small zamīndārīs styled ihtimām and mazkūrī were allowed to continue. Salīm Allāh also supports this when he says that the trustworthy and faithful zamīndārs were allowed to realise the revenues for the state from their respective zamīndārīs. It is probable that the zamīndārs were allowed to hold their zamīndārī if they agreed to the new settlement and accepted the subsistence allowance as their dues for collection. This would be in accordance with Murshid Qulī Khān's policy of reducing the administrative expenditure. On the other hand, a continuation of the zamīndārī settlement might merely mean that it was thought impolitic to try to do away with the zamīndārs at a stroke of the pen.

Salīm Allāh states that Murshid Qulī Khān did not assess the zamīndārīs of Birbhum and Bishnupur because of the inaccessibility of their lands. But Grant's description of the settlement of Murshid Qulī Khān includes them in the chaklah of Burdwan and Murshidabad, while the correction of Shujā' al-Dīn Muḥammad Khān puts them as separate ihtimāms. There is also no evidence to show that the Calcutta towns held by the English were surveyed by the

government. The right of the English was confirmed by Farrukh Siyar's farmān of 1717 on a fixed revenue. But Grant's description includes the Calcutta towns in the chaklah of Hugli while the correction of Shujā' al-Dīn puts them on a separate ihtimām with a revenue of Rs. 2,22,958. Salīm Allāh's evidence may therefore be accepted with some reservation. Even if he is correct in saying that Murshid Qulī Khān prepared the revenue roll after actual measurement of the land, village by village, plot by plot, the survey was not operated at least in the zamīndārīs of Birbhum, Bishnupur and the Calcutta towns.

Whether Murshid Qulī Khān's settlement represented the valuation or demand,[1] has also been questioned by modern scholars. Grant took it as demand and held the view that the assessment was a practical figure capable of realisation and that the amount was actually collected. W.H. Moreland is inclined to take the figures as representing the valuation. Moreland starts his argument from the settlement of Todar Mal. As Todar Mal settled the revenue for the whole sūbah , the major part of which was yet to be conquered, Moreland suggests that he included the whole sūbah in his settlement before its complete conquest and

1. The terms 'valuation', 'demand' and 'aggregate' have been used in the technical sense as explained by W.H.Moreland. See Agrarian System of Moslem India, Appendix A, pp. 209-215.

annexation.[1] The word used for the settlement either of Shāh Shujā' or of Murshid Qulī Khān is jama', which as Moreland points out stood for "aggregate" or "valuation".[2] A comparision of the settlement figures and the amount said to be dispatched to the imperial court by Murshid Qulī Khān shows that there was a wide discrepancy between the two. According to a memorandum of the treasury, published by James Grant,[3] Murshid Qulī Khān remitted to the imperial court in 15 years 9 months and 5 days, from the 5th year of the reign of Farrukh Siyar to the 9th year of Muḥammad Shāh, a total Bengal khālisah revenue of Rs. 14,07,38,136-1-8. According to this memorandum, the annual remittance of Murshid Qulī Khān to Delhi comes to about 94 lakh. But according to the settlement, the khālisah revenue amounted to about Rs. 109 lakh, thus showing a yearly deficit of about Rs. 15 lakh[4]. It follows, therefore, that the amount collected fell short of the amount settled. According to Salīm Allāh, Murshid Qulī Khān was strict in collection so

---

1. Moreland: Op. cit., p. 196.
2. Ibid., p. 197.
3. Fifth Report, Appendix 4, p. 213.
4. According to the treasury memorandum, Murshid-Qulī Khān despatched to Delhi a total of Rs.16,51,00,306-10-0 including the revenues of Orissa, Bhagalpur, nazar (presents) paid by the jagīrdārs, abwāb and the effects of Kamāl al-Dīn Khān, deceased. F.D. Ascoli (Early Revenue History of Bengal and the Fifth Report, p. 47) takes the entire amount of the memorandum for the khālisah, but it is incorrect to include the nazar of of the jāgīrdārs or the effects of Kamāl al-Dīn Khān into the khālisah.

that he saw to it that the revenue was collected to the last dām. According to these authors, therefore, the shortage cannot be attributed to the laxity of collectors. Grant covers the deficit by attributing it to the defalcation of the sūbahdār,[1] but the memorandum shows that Murshid Qulī Khān's effects sent to Delhi by Shujā' al-Dīn Muḥammad Khān after his (Murshid Qulī Khān's) death amounted to Rs. 60,93,227-5-3 only, whereas his defalcations alone would have been about Rs. 2 crore and 25 lakh in 15 years at the rate of Rs. 15 lakh per year. Though the above discussion does not help us to decide whether Murshid Qulī Khān's settlement represented the valuation or demand, it seems certain that the amount of settlement was never collected in full.

The rate of assessment in Murshid Qulī Khān's settlement is difficult to ascertain. While the standard rate in the time of Sher Shāh and Akbar was one third,[2] it is generally believed that in the reign of Aurangzīb the rate was increased to one half.[3] On this analogy Todar Mal's assessment may be taken as one third. But if Todar Mal's rate was one third, simple mathematical calculation does not allow us to accept the rate of Murshid Qulī Khān's

1. Fifth Report, Appendix 4, p. 214.
2. W.H. Moreland: Agrarian System of Moslem India, pp. 76, 91
3. Ibid., p. 135.

assessment at one half. The increase of revenue in the settlement of Shāh Shujā' after 76 years comes to 15½% and in that of Murshid Qulī Khān to a further 13½% in a further period of 64 years. Moreover, according to Shāh Shujā's settlement, the annexed territory added to Todar Mal's settlement area in the subsequent 76 years yielded a revenue of Rs. 14,35,593 which continued during the time of Murshid Qulī Khān. The question may, however, be discussed by comparison with the revenue figures of the later period. All the sūbahdārs from Murshid Qulī Khān to Mīr Qāsim imposed abwābs or cesses over and above the land revenues settled in 1722. Murshid Qulī Khān's cess known as abwāb-i-khāsnawīsī amounted to Rs. 2,58,857 per year. As Shore and Grant rightly remark,[1] though the amount of the cess was small, once Murshid Qulī Khān had introduced this unconstitutional imposition, he was followed by the other sūbahdārs who succeeded him so that by the time of Mīr Qāsim the cesses alone amounted to Rs. 1,17,91,853, almost equal to the revenues. No doubt, the cesses were imposed on and collected from the zamīndārs, but certainly the burden ultimately fell on the ra'yats. By 1763, within 36 years of Murshid Qulī Khān's death, the revenue of the country was almost doubled. If, therefore, Murshid Qulī Khān had settled the revenues at one half,

---

1. Fifth Report, II, pp. 9, 208.

the revenues of 1763 would represent the whole produce of the rayats. Even if allowance is made for the increase of cultivation and the rise in price of commodities owing to increased trade and the import of bullion by the European companies, the increase is out of proportion. An important piece of evidence is, however, available from the English records dealing with the management of the twenty four parganahs when they were made over to the English by Nawāb Sirāj al-Daulah in 1757. The Council's letter to the Court of Directors, explaining the value of their acquisition, states that out of 816,446 bighās of land in the parganahs, the zamīndārs collected revenues from only 454,804 bighās, the rest being either barren and untenanted or assigned to servants, idols, etc. and adds that revenues to be paid to the nawāb amounts to Rs. 2,15,000 or thereabout.[1] After receiving the reports from the qānūngos, the English came to know of the exact revenues to be paid and so the proceedings of the Council state that the revenues payable to the nawāb after deducting the various cesses (which the zamīndārs used to pay but from which the English were exempt) were Rs. 2,22,958-10-11.[2] Obviously, this revenue payable to the nawāb was according to the settlement of

---

1. I.O. Records: Letters Received from Bengal, Vol.IV, pp. 101 ff. Fifth Report, Vol. I, p. XCVIII.
2. Long: Selections from Records of the Government of India, Vol. I, No. 442.

Murshid Quli Khan and thus it may be stated that the revenue of each bighā was less than half a rupee. Soon after the acquisition of the twenty four parganahs by the English some native tax-farmers came forward with an offer to pay the net collection of the past year, plus an excess of Rs. 1,10,001.[1] The Council, however, farmed out the lands by auction at Rs. 7,65,700.[2] The amount bid at auction cannot be regarded as the normal revenue yield, because the farmer must have intended to extort the sum from the ráyats to cover the stipulated sum. In 1767, the farmers offered Rs. 10,00,001 for the said parganahs, but the Council refused to give them the right of collection, on the ground that the lands were worth more than they offered.[3] On this occasion, the president of the Council (Lord Clive) observed that the farmers collected Rs. 2/4/- to Rs. 2/12/- per bighā from the ráyats, whereas the farmers themselves or their servants paid a revenue of -/8/- annas or -/12/- annas for the lands under their plough.[4] The annas -/8/- or -/12/- may therefore be regarded as the actual rent per bighā payable by the ráyats, while the Rs. 2/4/- or Rs. 2/12/- realised from the ráyats represent the extortion of the farmers to meet the stipulated sum.

---

1. Fifth Report, Vol. I, p.C.
2. Long: Selection from Records of the Government of India, Vol. I, No. 443.
3. Ibid., No. 912.
4. Fifth Report, Vol. I, P. CVII.

Similarly, the English surveyors who were sent to Chittagong in 1761 reported on the basis of "a full and particular statement of the revenues" which they managed to secure only "after an infinite deal of trouble", that the total cultivable land was about 4,00,000 kānis. They further reported that Mīr Hādī, the faujdār of Chittagong had sent in 1713 a revene of Rs. 68,422-10-7½ to Murshidabad, while he collected Rs. 1,75,458.[1] According to Murshid Qulī Khān's settlement (as supplied by Grant) the chaklah of Islāmābād (Chittagong) was assessed a revenue of Rs. 1,76,795, which is almost equal to the amount said to have been collected by the faujdār in 1713. It seems, therefore, that the revenue per kāni was less than annas -/8/-. These figures, therefore, give the impression that the rate of assessment in the settlement of Murshid Qulī Khān did not exceed annas -/8/- per bighā or kāni. Even if allowance is made for the extension of cultivation during the three decades after Murshid Qulī Khān's death, the revenue per bighā cannot be taken to have been more than annas -/10/-. On an average, rice was sold in the time of Murshid Qulī Khān at 4 maunds per rupee.[2] The revenue per bighā was therefore from 2 maunds to 2½ maunds of rice, which seems to have been not more than one third of the produce.

1. Fifth Report, I, pp. CXX - CXXI.
2. T.B., f. 65b. See also S. Bhattacharya: East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, pp. 205, 213, note.

As for the method of collection, Salīm Allāh gives the impression that the revenues were collected both through the zamīndārs and the ʿāmils or collectors. He uses both the words zamīndārs and ʿāmils side by side whenever the question of revenue is discussed. But the statement that Murshid Qulī Khān realised the revenues from the zamīndārs and collectors or other officers according to fixed rates[1] /iqsāṭ or a schedule of rate/ suggests that both the zamīndārs and the collectors were guided by the revenue-roll prepared according to the survey. It is difficult to say how far Salīm Allāh's evidence regarding the oppression of defaulting zamīndārs and collectors may be accepted. Considering Murshid Qulī Khān's strict collection and the regular despatch of the revenues to the imperial court, it may be assumed that he punished defaulters, but Salīm Allāh's description carries the punishment to the extent of barbarity. The author does not adduce facts in support of his evidence. He cites only the instance of Udai Nārāyan, the zamīndār of Rajshahi and says that this man, who was assisted by his friend Ghulām Muḥammad Jamādār with two hundred horse, demurred at paying revenues and decided to fight. Murshid Qulī Khān sent Muḥammad Jān, the commander of the army against Udai Nārāyan. A battle ensued near Rajbari (in the modern Faridpur district) in which

1. T.B., f. 36b.

Ghulām Muḥammad was killed, after which, fearful of Murshid Qulī Khān's wrath, Udai Nārāyan killed himself. Thereafter his zamīndārī was given to Rāmjīvan.[1] The case of Udai Nārāyan was therefore one of suppression by armed force and not of barbarous punishments such as Salīm Allāh states were used on defaulting zamīndārs and ʿāmils. There is no doubt that Hindu officers were appointed in large number in the time of Murshid Qulī Khān, particularly in the revenue department.[2] If his policy was to convert them to Islam under pretext of default, it is doubtful whether the Hindus would have accepted the posts at all. It has been pointed out already that two other instances, those of Darpa Nārāyan and Kinkar Sen, cited by Salīm Allāh as examples of Murshid Qulī Khān's oppression, do not stand the test of investigation. It is true that defaulters were punished, but there is ample room to doubt the authenticity of Salīm Allāh's general statements regarding Murshid Qulī Khān's (as also Sayyid Raḍi Khān's) barbarous punishments of the defaulting zamīndārs or collectors. The same author paints Murshid Qulī Khān as an extreme just man to the extent that he killed his own son on a call of justice.[3] At present, there exists, however, no other

---

1. T.B., f. 37b and 38a.
2. See Supra, pp.114-15
3. See Supra, p.116

source either to verify Salīm Allāh's statement or to disprove it.

It is now possible to summarise the main points of Murshid Qulī Khān's revenue reform. The underlying policy in the settlement was to prepare a perfect revenue-roll, collecting information about the productivity of the soil and the capacity of the husbandmen to pay. Though the survey does not seem to have been as thorough as stated by Salīm Allāh, there seems no doubt that Murshid Qulī Khān was able to collect much information and so prepare a more accurate revenue-roll, partly by actual survey and partly by the help of old records. It appears that Murshid Qulī Khān did not bring about a drastic change in the existing revenue system. The collection of revenue was made both by the zamīndārs and the ʿāmils. The hereditary nature of the zamīndārs were recognised as long as they maintained regularity in collecting and paying revenues to the government. But he was no friend of the defaulters, who not only were dispossessed, but, if Salīm Allāh is correct, received barbarous punishment. An innovation of Murshid Qulī Khān was the holding of the puṇya[1] (a ceremony at the closing of

1. T.B., f. 38a; Riāḍ, p. 256. Hunter (Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol. IX, p. 133) is of the opinion that Murshid Qulī Khān introduced the system. Jadunath Sarkar (Mughal Administration, p. 7 note) takes it to be a "Hindu revenue usage coming down from very ancient time through the Muhammadan age to the British period". It seems very likely that it was an old Hindu usage, but we do not know of any earlier example of holding puṇya by any Muslim ruler.

the end of the year accounts), when the collection of the revenue was complete and a balance sheet was prepared. The cases of loss of produce due to natural calamities and remission of payment arising out of them, were decided during this time. The assessment thus seems to have represented the valuation rather than demand and an actual examination of the figures supplied by James Grant shows that the total assessed revenues were never collected. The rate of assessment also seems to be moderate, probably not more than one third of the gross produce. The evidence of agricultural loans having been advanced, of the moderate assessment of revenues, the assessment looking to the productivity of the land and the capacity of the husbandmen to pay, of the strict collection of revenues and their regular despatch to the imperial court, all these suggest that Murshid Qulī Khān's reforms were aimed at achieving the double purpose of collecting as much revenue as possible and at the same time making the peasants happy and prosperous.

Jadunath Sarkar criticises Murshid Qulī Khān's system on the ground that he dispossessed the old landed proprietors of Bengal and gave contracts for the collection of revenues to a class of people called ijārādārs (farmers or contractors). He terms the system māl-dāminī and is of the opinion that "many of the zamīndārs remained but under

the thumbs of the new ijāradārs, and in time they were crushed out of existence". With these new contractors Murshid Qulī Khān formed a new landed aristocracy who were ultimately confirmed by Lord Cornwallis in the permanent settlement.[1] For his māl-dāminī system, Jadunath Sarkar cites Ahkām-i-Ālamgīrī which states that on one occasion Aurangzīb censured Murshid Qulī Khān for his farming out the revenues to ijārādārs, but that on the representation of Murshid Qulī Khān that "he took security-bonds from the contractors of the revenue collection and fixed the periodical instalments payable by them at the prayer of the cultivators and following the practice of the late dīwān Kifāyat Khān", the emperor expressed his satisfaction over his settlement. The learned scholar also quotes the same passage of Salīm Allāh which has been quoted heretofore, to show the harsh working of Murshid Qulī Khān's system.[2]

---

1. H.B., II, pp. 408-17.
2. Jadunath Sarkar's quotation slightly differs from our own. The following sentence quoted by him (H.B.II, p. 412) does not occur in the I.O. Ms. we have consulted. "After some years, his agents, in order to enhance the collection, resumed to the state the subsistence-lands of the zamindārs and by other kinds of exaction raised the surplus revenue of the province from one crore and thirty lakhs of rupees to one kror and fifty lakhs". In discussing the capability of Darpa Nārāyan Qānūngo, Salīm Allāh states that by resuming the nānkar lands of the zamindārs, Darpa Nārāyan increased the revenue to one crore and fifty lakh. But this evidence of Salīm Allāh is obviously an exaggeration because, on many other occasions, Salim Allāh himself refers to the existence of zamindārs.

In conclusion, however, Sarkar writes that Murshid Qulī Khān demanded only the standard revenue, abolished all illegal cesses, punished only those contractors who were in default, maintained internal peace thus increasing the people's tax-paying power and that the people in his time found a breathing time and that his increase of revenue did not mean extortion.[1]

But Jadunath Sarkar does not consider the figures of Murshid Qulī Khān's settlement supplied by James Grant. It is difficult to understand how he reconciles Salīm Allāh's description of the actual survey of the land with farming of revenues (or māl-dāminī) to the contractors referred to in the Aḥkām-i-Ālamgīrī. If the contractors were allowed to collect only the fixed revenues ascertained by the actual survey of land and assessed on the basis of the productivity of the land and capability of the husbandmen to pay as accepted by Sarkar himself, were not these contractors reduced to the position of government officers like ʿāmils (or collectors) ? Secondly, what were the emoluments of the contractors ? Were they paid in cash or in jāgīr or in the subsistence allowance called nānkar lands ? If they were paid in cash or in jāgīr, they were merely government officers and if paid by a subsistence allowance like nānkar lands, they were merely zamīndārs. Thirdly, it

---

1. H.B., II, p. 417.

is also doubtful whether Murshid Qulī Khān ruined the historic zamīndārs in a manner as described by Jadunath Sarkar. He himself cites the example of three new zamīndārs created by Murshid Qulī Khān. The learned scholar probably follows the family history of the zamīndārs as given by James Grant which is faulty. A detailed study of the history of the zamīndār families conducted during the late 19th century, shows that most of the big zamīndāris like Burdwan, Nadia, Dinajpur and Lashkarpur can trace their origin prior to the time of Murshid Qulī Khān,[1] though there is no doubt that Murshid Qulī Khān dispossessed many small defaulting zamīndārs. Jadunath Sarkar himself agrees[2] that Murshid Qulī Khān punished only the defaulters, and not each and every collector or zamīndār. Fourthly, the māl-dāminī system referred to in the Aḥkām-i-Ālamgīrī, must be placed in the time of Aurangzīb, i.e. during the early years of Murshid Qulī Khān's dīwānī. But a combined study of Salīm Allāh and James Grant gives the impression that Murshid Qulī Khān studied the land-system of Bengal for a long period; the settlement was completed about a score of years later than his first assumption of the dīwānī, culminating in the year 1722. Fifthly, and this seems most important, Salīm Allāh always refers to the

1. "The territorial aristocracy in Bengal" in Calcutta Review, Vols. LIV, LV, LVI.
2. H.B., II, p. 413.

zamīndārs and ʿāmils side by side thus suggesting that both the direct and indirect methods of collection, i.e. both through the collectors or ʿāmils and through the zamīndārs were maintained by Murshid Qulī Khān. If therefore, Salīm Allāh is to be believed (and he is the main authority of Jadunath Sarkar), we shall rather credit Murshid Qulī Khān with having realised the need of surveying the lands and with trying to collect information of the productivity of the land and the capability of the husbandmen to pay than make him responsible for a farming system. There is no instance to show that Murshid Qulī Khān farmed out the lands to the highest bidder as was done by the English initially in the ceded lands, nor of the zamīndārs or collectors being allowed a free hand to deal with the ráyats. All were guided by a revenue-roll, prepared on the basis of actual production and the ráyats were not left to the caprice of the zamīndārs or collectors. The importance of Murshid Qulī Khān's settlement may be gauged from the fact that it formed the basis for all succeeding sūbahdārs, who had neither the time nor aptitude to make a detailed survey. It could have formed the basis for the English as well if they had been able to get hold of the records and if the qānūngos had been more cooperative with the new administration.

The system of coinage

The coining of money was not unknown to the Hindu rulers of ancient India. During the Muslim period, coining continued and by the time of Aurangzīb, the Mughals were issuing coins in all the three metals, gold, silver and copper from about 200 mints in different parts of the empire. In the early 18th century, there were three mints in the eastern provinces at Dacca, Rajmahal and Patna. After the establishment of a mint by Murshid Qulī Khān at Murshidabad the Rajmahal mint was discontinued. During the time of Murshid Qulī Khān, coins were struck at the Dacca and Murshidabad mints; Patna, being put under a separate sūbahdār,[1] was outside his jurisdiction.

The coins mostly used for big transactions were the silver ones called sicca rupees, the gold coins having been more 'fancy' used for paying presents to the emperor or higher officers. The sicca rupees bore upon them the year of the king's reign and were of the weight of 10 māshā and of $\frac{98}{100}$ fineness. They were not token but passed for the same value as the silver they contained, making allowance for $\frac{2}{100}$ mixture to cover the cost of coining.[2] The

1. Jadunath Sarkar has correctly pointed out that Murshid Qulī Khān had no connection with the province of Bihar after the death of Aurangzīb. See H.B. II, p.407, note 1.
2. James Stewart: Principles of Money applied to the present State of the Coin in Bengal, p. 15.

government tried to maintain the real value of the coin which led to a complicated system as discussed below: -

The sicca rupees were not the standard or ideal coin of Bengal. The ideal coin was one current rupee, an imaginary one, and all transactions made in silver coins were adjusted with the current rupee. To make the point clear, an example is given below as the position stood in 1772.[1]

(a) The sicca rupees in the first year of their coining were considered 16% better than the current rupee, i.e. 100 sicca rupees were equivalent to 116 current rupees.

(b) The sicca rupees in the second year of their coining were considered 13% better than the current rupee, i.e. 100 sicca rupees of the second year were equivalent to 113 current rupees.

(c) The sicca rupees of the third year and after, and called sunat rupees were 11% better than the current rupee, i.e. 100 sunat rupees were equivalent to 111 current rupees.

(d) All other coins (e.g. Madras rupees of the English) were 10% better than the current rupee, though in fineness and weight they were no worse than the sunat rupees.

---

1. Ibid., p. 16.

The reason for making the current rupee standard or ideal is that as the current rupee did not exist at all, it could not be falsified or worn. It was not possible to recoin all the old coins every year, so that a large number of old coins of the second or third year were in circulation. These coins were adjusted to the current rupee according to a rate of batta or discount and thus the real value of the coins was maintained. The policy of realising a batta or discount must have been adopted to ensure the collection of the full value of the revenues which were assessed in terms of sicca rupees. If, for example, the revenues were paid in the sicca rupees of the second year or sunat rupees, which may have lost weight by the passage of time, the government revenues would have been less in proportion to the loss of weight of these rupees. To make good the loss, therefore, a discount was realised, although in fact, there may have been no loss of weight in any particular sicca rupee.

If only the sicca rupees struck at one mint had been in circulation, the situation would have been easier to control. But coins struck at different mints of the empire and those struck by the English at Surat or Madras were also legal tender. The complication, therefore, arose from the currency of various coins issued from various mints.

"There are various mints established by ancient custom, where the regulations both as to the fineness and the weight of the coins are different, though their denomination be the same. From this and from punching out holes, and filling up these holes with base metals, as well as wilfully diminishing the weight of the coin, after coining from the mint, the currencies of rupees of different provinces are of different values."[1]

It follows, therefore, that the currency system was extremely vexatious. This gave rise to a class of people called sarraf or shroff, money-changer or banker. The business of these people was to determine the value of the different currencies according to circumstances - a process often conducted in their own favour when changing one type of coin for another. "When a sum of rupees is brought to a shroff, he examines them piece by piece, ranges them according to their fineness, then by their weight. Then he allows for the different legal battas upon siccas and sunats; and this done, he values it gross by the rupee current, what the whole quantity is worth."[2] No doubt, the system ensured the full value of each piece of coin, but it proved extremely vexatious to the people. As James

---

1. James Steuart: Op.cit., p.17.
2. Ibid.

Steuart puts it, "no person can tell the value of the coin he is possessed of until a shroff be consulted upon the matter".[1]

During the time of Murshid Qulī Khān, the coins most commonly in circulation in Bengal were the sicca rupees struck in the government mints at Dacca or Murshidabad and the Madras rupees imported by the English from Madras where they had their own mint and coined money with imperial permission, in exact imitation of the coins issued by the imperial mint. During this time, the sicca rupees of the first year were considered 12½% better than the current rupee.[2] The rate of the sicca rupees of the second year or sunat rupees is not known, but it may be presumed that they were proportionately lower rated. The Madras rupees of the English were generally considered 9% better than the current rupee.[3] Though this standard was generally maintained, the shroffs did not fail to create temporary situations by hoarding a particular type of coin so as to push up the rate artificially. Such rigging of the market by the shroffs proved detrimental to the people and businessmen while the shroffs derived benefit from their hoarded stock. The Calcutta Council cites one such example

---

1. Ibid., p. 24.
2. Bengal General letter, 18th January, 1717.
3. Consultations, 17th October, 1709.

in their Consultations. The sicca rupees of the year 1710 were 4¾% heavier than the usual so that the batta was fixed (probably by the shroffs) at 20%, and for the sicca rupees of the previous year (i.e. 1709) the batta was fixed at 16%. But the new siccas soon became scarce; the shroffs hoarded them all and raised the batta to 29%. Thus the merchants were put to great hardship, especially those who received from the English Madras rupees which did not pass for more than 11% or 12%. A complaint was made to Murshid Quli Khān, who compelled the shroffs to agree that the new sicca rupees should pass for no more appreciation than Rs. 15/10/-.[1]

Another important feature was the drain of coins from Bengal to the imperial capital. Murshid Quli Khān dispatched the imperial revenues in hard cash, rather than in bills of exchange.[2] As he sent roughly one crore of rupees per year, all the coins struck in the mint must have been dispatched to the capital, thus potentially leaving the country devoid of any coins. The extensive export trade of Bengal was therefore a welcome relief to the provincial

---

1. Ibid., 9th August, 1711.
2. T.B., f. 38b, 39a; Riād, pp. 256-57. From the Consultations it appears that Murshid Quli Khān sent the revenues in hard cash as late as 1726. According to Mandevile's letter dated 27th November, 1750, after dispatching the revenues to Delhi every year "there is hardly currency enough in Bengal to carry on any trade or even to go to market for provisions of necessaries of life." (James Steuart: Op.cit., p. 63).

government because the European companies imported bullion in considerable quantity. After the depreciation of the English Madras rupees in 1709, the English generally imported bullion while the Dutch imported bullion from Butavia and other companies also did the same.

It is strange that Murshid Qulī Khān did nothing to utilise the imported bullion in favour of the government or to reform the complicated currency system, giving relief to the people and simplifying the business transactions. Instead of monopolising the minting of coins and the purchase of bullion, he allowed the shroffs to deal in silver and to strike coins in the government mint. The government obtained 2½% duties for the use of the mint, the total gain, according to James Grant, amounted to Rs. 3,04,103/- in the year 1722.[1] But for this small gain, the government lost control over the currency system of the country and allowed the shroffs to dictate the price of bullion and sometimes also of the sicca rupees as has been shown from an instance of 1711 discussed above. It was largely due to this impolitic policy of Murshid Qulī Khān that the House of Jagat Seṭh rose to an eminent position in Bengal and from the role of dictator of terms in money matters in the time of Murshid Qulī Khān became the dictator of terms in politics in the

---

1. Fifth Report, II, p. 199.

time of Sirāj al-Daulah.

The House of Jagat Seṭh[1]

The founder of the great banking house of Jagat Seṭh (banker of the world) was Hirānand Sāhā, an inhabitant of Nagaur in Marwar (Rajputana) and belonging to the Gairlarha family of the tribe of Oswals. In the year 1652, in the reign of Shāh Jahān, Hirānand Sāhā had come to Patna to establish his business firm. Hirānand died in 1711 leaving seven sons, the eldest of whom was Mānikchānd Sāhā, to whom the banking house owed its greatness. In the later years of the 17th or early years of the 18th century, Mānikchānd left for Dacca, probably during the time of ʿAẓīm al-Shān and established his firm there. But soon after, he accompanied Murshid Qulī Khān to Murshidabad (then Makhṣūṣābād), when the latter shifted the dīwānī to the last named town. In Murshidabad, Mānikchānd became a favourite of Murshid Qulī Khān. He was also on friendly terms with the English Company. The Calcutta Council always refer to him as "an eminent merchant" and once at least presented him with goods.[2] The English also employed him

1. The early history of the family of Jagat Seṭh is derived from J.H. Little's "House of Jagat Seth", published in Bengal: Past and Present, Vols. XX-XXII.
2. Consultations, 23rd February, 1705.

to conduct negotiations on their behalf with Murshid Qulī Khān for procuring his sanad.[1] The position of Mānikchānd may be realised from the fact that in 1712, when the war of succession for the imperial throne was going on between ʿAẓīm al-Shān on the one hand and his brothers on the other, Murshid Qulī Khān presented/sar-o-pā and one elephant to Mānikchānd and one horse to his nephew Fateḥchānd to declare to the people the accession of ʿAẓīm al-Shān.[2] In 1712, when Farrukh Siyar enthroned himself at Patna and proceeded to compete for the throne and was hard-hit for money, he took loans from the bankers of Patna, Mānikchānd being the chief creditor of the future emperor.[3] Soon after his accession, Farrukh Siyar honoured Mānikchānd with the title of Nagar Śeṭh (city banker). Mānikchānd died in 1714, but before his death, the banking house was firmly established. He was succeeded by his nephew (sister's son) Fateḥchānd, whom he had adopted in boyhood and to whom he had given his training in the banking business and it is during Fateḥchānd's time that the real greatness of the house and the banking firm was achieved.

Fateḥchānd received the title of Śeṭh from Farrukh

---

1. See infra, p.181
2. Consultations, 7th April, 1712.
3. Bengal: Past and Present, Vol. XX, pp. 130-31.

Siyar in 1715, but he was destined to get greater honours in a few years to come. Fateḥchānd's role as a banker and his influence over Murshid Qulī Khān is manifested by the contemporary English records. Up to the year 1717, Raghunandan was the dāroghah of the mint, which suggests that the mint of Murshidabad was under the control and superintendence of the government officers.[1] But Murshid Qulī Khān allowed the shroffs to coin money out of their own bullion on payment of usual customs. Fateḥchānd Sāhā was one of those shroffs who enjoyed the privilege. The attempt of the English Company to enjoy the privilege of coining money free of customs was denied to them even after their receipt of the imperial farmān in 1717.[2] The Consultations of the Calcutta Council show that by 1721, Fateḥchānd had got entire control over the mint, so that he alone had the privilege of coining money.[3] This privilege not only made him the premier banker but also gave him an opportunity to control the price of bullion imported by the European companies. Several occasions have been cited in the Consultations when Fateḥchānd dictated terms to the English regarding the price of bullion.[4] It is no wonder, therefore, that he rose to an important position in the years to come.

---

1. Consultations, 18th July, 1717.
2. See infra, pp.267-71.
3. Consultations, 28th August, 9th November, 1721.
4. Consultations, 9th November, 1721.

Fatehchand's real greatness may be dated to the year 1723, when he got the title of Jagat Śeṭh. According to a Qasimbazar report, Murshid Qulī Khān 'fleeced' five lakh of rupees from Fateḥchānd in 1722.[1] Both Salīm Allāh and Salīm state that on the recommendation of Murshid Qulī Khān, the emperor conferred the title of Jagat Śeṭh (world banker) on Fateḥchānd.[2] The farmān of Emperor Muḥammad Shāh conferring the title on Fateḥchānd is dated 1723.[3] A tradition current in the family of Jagat Śeṭh in Murshidabad, states that on a certain occasion, the emperor was displeased with Murshid Qulī Khān because of the latter's irregularity in sending the imperial revenues, and it was on Fateḥchānd's recommendation that the emperor pardoned the ṣūbahdār.[4] But there is reason to cast doubt on the authenticity of the tradition. As the tradition was current in the family of Jagat Śeṭh, it seems that it came down in a twisted form. Instead of procuring the title of Jagat Seth for Fateḥchānd by the recommendation of Murshid Qulī Khān, as stated by Salīm Allāh and Salīm, the tradition twists it the other way by making Fateḥchānd procure the emperor's pardon for Murshid Qulī Khān. It is probable that the 'fleecing' of five lakh of rupees from Fateḥchānd by

---

1. Ibid., 24th June, 1722.
2. T.B., f. 58a; Riāḍ, p. 274
3. Bengal: Past and Present, Vol. XXII, Appendix 6, p. 117.
4. Ibid., Vol. XX, p. 148.

Murshid Qulī Khān in 1722 had some connection with conferment of the title on Fateḥchānd in 1723. The sequence of events suggests so. It is doubtful whether Fateḥchānd had become so powerful as to influence the decision of the emperor before he got the title of Jagat Śeṭh in 1723. Whatever the sequence may be, Fateḥchānd (now Jagat Śeṭh) became most influential in Murshidabad after 1723. The Consultations of the Calcutta Council call Fateḥchānd "the nabob's chief favourite". The English applied to Fateḥchānd to offer his good offices with the nawāb, whenever there had arisen any dispute with the government.[1] But Fateḥchānd was destined to play a more important role in the succeeding period, even influencing the appointment of the sūbahdārs in the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.[2]

The administration of Bengal during the time of Murshid Qulī Khān, as discussed above, shows that Murshid Qulī Khān centralised all powers in his own hands. Murshid Qulī Khān's genius is best illustrated in his revenue reform, but his failure to reform the complicated currency system was most impolitic. The manner in which he fixed the batta of the sicca rupees in 1710,[3] and the way he denied the English the privilege of coining money free of customs,[4]

---

1. Consultations, 26th August, 22nd October, 2nd December, 1723; 25th October, 1726; 13th March, 1727.
2. Bengal: Past and Present, Vol. XX, p. 149.
3. See supra, p.156.
4. See infra, pp.167-71

show that he could have taken some measures to reform the currency system or at least to control the minting of coins if he had so wanted. Instead, he won over the great banker Jagat Śeṭh, but he did not foresee that the government was gradually losing control of the currency system. The chief credit of Murshid Qulī Khān in this field was due to his maintenance of peace, giving relief to the people from both internal and external dangers and saving the rāyats from extortion. By careful management he also realised an increased revenue and sent the imperial revenues regularly. He, therefore, proved to be an efficient civil servant discharging the duties and responsibilities reposed in him by the emperor.

Chapter IV

THE EUROPEAN COMPANIES IN BENGAL

Section I

Murshid Qulī Khān's relations with the English 1700-1707[1]

Bengal's export trade expanded by leaps and bounds during the time of Murshid Qulī Khān. The chief exporters of Bengal's goods were the European companies of which three - the English, the Dutch and the French carried on trade during the whole period, while the Danes left Bengal in 1714 and the Ostenders entered the field towards the closing years of Murshid Qulī Khān's rule. It is thus worthwhile to discuss the privileges obtained by the companies from the government. The English were the recipient of the highest favour from the government. Murshid Qulī Khān's relations with the English have been most misunderstood and misinterpreted by the modern scholars. The question therefore, has been studied in detail and four out of the five sections into which this chapter is divided have been devoted to evaluating the position of the English.

---

1. This section is substantially the same as my article published in the Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient, Vol. IV, pp.264-288.

Position of the English in 1700

In 1700, when Murshid Quli Khān took over as diwān of Bengal, the English traders were divided among themselves. Two years before, in 1698, in accordance with an Act of Parliament, the English king, William III, had chartered a new company entitled "English Company trading to the East Indies".[1] Though the Old Company was obliged to accept a less popular title "The London Company", they had already established themselves in Calcutta, having with permission of the sūbahdār secured the right of renting three villages, Sutanuti, Govindpur and Calcutta.[2] There they fortified Fort William and thus acquired a secure foothold to look after their trading interests. The Old Company also had, on the strength of the imperial farmān, the privilege of free trade on payment of a yearly pīshkash of Rs. 3,000 only.

The new Company, however, had to start afresh. At their instance the English king sent Sir William Norris as his ambassador to the Mughal emperor with the object of securing for themselves the favour of the Indian government[3]

---

1. Bruce: Annals of the Honorable East India Company from their Establishment by the Charter of Queen Elizabeth, 1600 to the Union of the London and English East India Companies, 1707-8, Vol. III, pp. 250, 255, 258.
2. Ibid., p. 278.
3. Bruce: Op.cit., p. 261; Wilson, I, p. 152.

and "to solicit Phirmaunds /farmāns/ or privileges, for the English nation and to render the English Company its representative in the East Indies".[1] The mission of Sir William Norris was, however, a complete failure. Nor did their president, Sir Edward Littleton, fare any better in Bengal. He received permission for trade only after paying Rs. 70,000 to the sūbahdār.[2] The permission was not only for a limited period but also "on the same terms as granted to the Interlopers, that is, to pay three thousand rupees for permission to make sales and purchases for each ship, and /to/ give security for six thousand more should the Ambassador not procure a Phirmaund within the year".[3]

Murshid Qulī Khān's attitude to the two Companies

No satisfactory idea can be formed of the attitude of the new dīwān (Murshid Qulī Khān) to the two Companies. Both the presidents, John Beard of the Old Company and Sir Edward Littleton of the new, took him to be friendly. Beard represents the dīwān "as a man of talents and mild disposition and disposed to protect trade", while Sir Edward Littleton expects to get a parwānah from the new dīwān even though the mission of Sir William Norris fails.[4] But soon

1. Bruce: Op.cit., p. 281.
2. Ibid., p. 450.
3. Ibid., p. 415.
4. Ibid., pp. 444, 482. The terms farmān, ḥasb al-ḥukm, nishān, sanad and parwānah mean letters patent. But in the official usage, the one issued by the emperor was called farmān, the one issued by order of the emperor and under the seal of vizier was called ḥasb al-ḥukm, the one by a prince was called nishān and the one by other officers like sūbahdār or dīwān was called sanad or parwānah.

the servants of the two Companies involved themselves in mutual quarrels and jealousies which adversely affected the interests of both. The presidents or agents of the New Company demanded that the consular powers with which they were invested should be recognised by their compatriots of the Old Company. Sir Edward Littleton, the New Company's president and consul in Bengal ordered the Calcutta Council of the Old Company to suspend all applications to the Mughal government and to forbear issuing passes for their goods to the country vessels.[1] Sir Nicholas Waite, the president and consul of the New Company in Surat went so far as to write to the Mughal government that the servants of the Old Company were parties to the piracies in India.[2] The insinuations made by an English agent against his own countrymen proved detrimental to the interests of both the English Companies, nay of all European traders.

Aurangzīb's orders to seize the European traders

Aurangzīb was always worried over the depredations of the pirates and their harassment of the Muslim pilgrims to Mecca. He always suspected that the European traders were responsible for these outrages and now he found

1. Bruce: Op.cit., pp. 324, 348; Wilson, I, p. 155.
2. Bruce: Op.cit., p. 337.

that the English traders themselves were accusing one another. At the end of 1701, the emperor issued a farmān ordering his officers to interdict all Europeans' trade in India.[1] The farmān was executed in Bengal towards the beginning of 1702 and the task of execution fell on the sūbahdār and the dīwān. Dīwān Murshid Qulī Khān as an efficient and favourite officer of Aurangzīb must have acted vigorously. Among the English traders, the first victims were the Old Company whose servants and effects in Patna and Rajmahal were seized in February, 1702. The loss in effects amounted to Rs. 1800 and some of their factors were confined.[2] Towards the end of the year the New Company lost heavily. The report of President Beard of the Old Company shows that the New Company lost Rs. 62,000.[3] But according to the report of the New Company's Council, "all Europeans were indiscriminately seized in Out-Factories, and the English Company's [New Company's] Agents at Cassimbuzar, Rajahmahl, and Patna, thrown into prison, and their effects sealed up:- the property belonging to the English Company seized at Rajahmahl, was estimated at seventy thousand rupees".[4] This latter report, therefore,

1. Wheeler: Madras in Olden Times, Vol. I, pp. 386-87; Wilson, I, p. 160.
2. Bruce: Op.cit., p. 506; Wilson, I, p. 161.
3. Bruce: Op.cit., p. 506; Wilson, I, p. 161.
4. Bruce: Op.cit., p. 524.

suggests that the loss in the Rajmahal factory alone amounted to Rs. 70,000 while the total loss of the New Company was still higher. Whether the New Company's Council gave an exaggerated account of the loss to their masters in England is difficult to say, but even if President Beard's report giving the smaller figure is accepted, the loss to the New Company was heavy. The faujdār of Hu̱li planned to take possession of the Old Company's effects at Calcutta, plans which if they had materialised would have caused heavy loss to the Old Company as well, since they held all their effects in Fort William. But President Beard decided to resist and the show of resistance stopped the faujdār from an actual attack. The situation continued for about three months till the sūbahdār intervened in favour of the English, though the dīwān insisted upon the execution of the farmān.[1] The faujdār (of Hu̱li), however, stopped the transit of some of the Old Company's boats going down the river. A present of Rs. 5,000 from President Beard incited him to demand more at which the English stopped the passage of all Mughal ships down the river for nine days, a blockade which they withdrew only after the faujdār had cleared the Company's boats. The situation soon changed, however, when the emperor issued orders

---

1. Ibid., p. 506.

towards the end of 1702 for taking off the embargo upon trade.[1]

The above account shows that Murshid Qulī Khān, on his appointment as the dīwān of Bengal was favourably disposed to the protection of trade and was friendly to the English. He took action against the traders only after the imperial farmān had been issued for seizure of the Europeans. Miss Anjali Sen, however, remarks, "As soon as Murshid Qulī Khān was firmly seated in power, he set at naught the privileges they [the English] had gained from Prince Shujā' and Emperor Aurangzīb."[2] It is not known where-from Miss Sen got this information, but as has been mentioned above, the reports of both the Old and the New Companies in Bengal do not warrant such an opinion.

Murshid Qulī Khān's attitude after the withdrawal of farmān

As soon as the emperor's orders withdrawing the embargo upon trade were received, Murshid Qulī Khān relaxed his severity and offered the freedom of trade as before. The offer of freedom of trade was, however, coupled with a demand of a considerable amount of money from the European traders. According to a report of the Old Company, the dīwān demanded that "the two English Companies, the French

1. Ibid., pp. 506-07.
2. Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol.XXXV, p. 18.

and the Dutch would give the Prince a present of twenty thousand rupees each:- this, President Beard, for the London Company [Old Company], refused, and rested his refusal on the grants which they had obtained from the Mogul."[1] The report of the New Company officers, however, says that the prince demanded "sixty thousand rupees, as a present, to be equally furnished by the Dutch, French and the two English Companies."[2] The two reports therefore differ both in the amount of money demanded and the person demanding the same. But there is reason to accept the New Company's report, because the Company actually paid Rs. 15,000 to the prince and obtained permission for trade on the same terms as the Old Company enjoyed.[3] The dīwān probably joined with the prince in demanding this amount, because as will be seen hereafter, the United Company made it a point in their negotiations with the dīwān for a sanad.

Charles Stewart gives an altogether different version. He says "[when the imperial orders for taking off the embargo upon trade was received] the Dewan relaxed in his severity and offered freedom of trade to all the Europeans provided they would make him and the Prince handsome presents;

---

1. Bruce: Op.cit., p. 507.
2. Ibid., p. 525.
3. Ibid.; Bengal letters dated 20th January, 1704 also says that the diwān demanded 15,000 rupees. See Abstract of letters from "Coast" and "Bay", Vol. I.

which the English refused. The Dewan, however, insisted upon the agents of the three European nations producing the original firmans upon which they claimed their privileges. The Dutch and French produced theirs; but the firman of Sultan Shujaa, having been lost, by one of the English agents in going to Madras, forty years before, the English were obliged to bribe the Dewan's secretary to let the matter drop."[1] It is not known wherefrom Stewart got this information, but in the face of stronger evidence his information seems to be incredible. In the first place, Stewart does not make any distinction between the old and new English Companies, whereas the reports of the officers of the two Companies in Bengal as cited above show that the Old Company refused to pay, while the New Company actually paid the prince. Secondly, the Old Company's privileges rested not only on Prince Shujā''s nishān, but on various other farmāns and parwānahs issued by Aurangzīb and by the former sūbahdārs and dīwāns of Bengal. As will be seen hereafter, in their negotiations with Murshid Qulī Khān they submitted some of these documents in original. Thirdly, if Murshid Qulī Khān at all demanded the original farmāns, whether he "let the matter drop" because his secretary had been bribed, is open to question.

---

1. Stewart: History of Bengal, p. 358.

Miss Anjali Sen goes a step further.[1] She accepts and quotes both Stewart and Bruce and goes on to record the loss of the New Company which they sustained during the execution of Aurangzīb's farmān and attributes these losses to the severity of Murshid Qulī Khān after the English had refused to make good his demand. She thus fails to follow the sequence of time and also fails to notice that there were two English companies and that Bruce (the authority she quotes) recorded the loss of the two companies during the execution of Aurangzīb's farmān in two different places.

Union of the two English Companies

While the English traders in Bengal were facing these troubles, their masters at home were planning to unite the two Companies. By the "Charter of Union" dated 22nd July, 1702, the two Companies were united and renamed "The United Company of Merchants of England trading to the East Indies."[2] The year 1703 was spent in making arrangements for carrying out the union in Bengal. Inventories of dead stock of the two Companies were made and the accounts balanced. A council of eight members was formed, taking four members from each of the defunct Companies, the senior most member of each group presiding over the council in alternate weeks. The arrangements were complete by January, 1704 and from

1. Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol. XXXV, pp. 19-20.
2. Bruce: Op.cit., pp. 486-89.

1st February the United Council took over and began to function.[1]

Position of the United Company vis-a-vis the Mughal government

The union of the two Companies presented peculiar problems to the United Company in their relation to the Mughal government. President Beard compared the two Companies on the eve of the union as follows. "The London Company, he said, were exempt from customs, but the English Company were under Security-Bonds to pay them, and under worse circumstances than the Interlopers, as they purchased their goods in the name of Native merchants, and were to pay three thousand rupees for each ship, on their being laden for England:- the London Company, he added, had the power of issuing 'dusticks', but could not allow the English Company to avail themselves of them, without involving themselves in all those disputes with the Native officers, to which the trade of the English Company had been liable;- the English Company not having obtained a Phirmaund, and being liable to pay three years' customs."[2]

This analysis of President Beard has been accepted by modern scholars, though it does not seem to be wholly correct. The Old Company was no doubt exempted from customs on payment of Rs. 3,000 per year. In 1702, the

1. Consultations, 2nd February, 1704.
2. Bruce: Op.cit., pp. 507-08.

New Company also got the same privilege after paying Rs. 15,000 to the sūbahdār. It is, however, probable that the New Company's privilege was conditional upon their procuring an imperial farmān. Both the Companies were also at par in the matter of issuing dastaks (passes) from their respective headquarters at Calcutta or Hugli. The only defect of the New Company was that they had no imperial farmān and that they were liable to pay three years' customs.[1] It follows therefore that the position of the two Companies did not differ subatantially. But even so the problem of the United Company in relation to the Mughal government was very great. In the first place, what would be the attitude of the government towards the union ? The United Company would, no doubt, claim their succession from the Old Company with all their privileges and rest their claim on the imperial farmān. The Mughal officers on the other hand might regard the United Company as a successor to the New Company and might put pressure on them to secure a fresh farmān. Secondly, would the government be satisfied with a pīshkash of Rs. 3,000 only or would they demand Rs. 6,000 as was due before the union? As will be seen presently, these points coupled with some others remained the basis for the United Company's long-

---

1. The arrears were actually paid in January, 1705 (Consultations, 16th January, 1705).

protracted negotiations with Murshid Qulī Khān.

Early measures of the United Council

The English were not unaware of the problems facing them in the years to come. First of all they took some preliminary measures to settle affairs amongst themselves. On the suggestion of the former presidents of the defunct companies, the United Council agreed to "defer our making any declaration to the government till further consideration and that both the vacquills /wakīls/ continue and answer if any questions be asked of them" and "also agreed that Sir Edward Littleton's seal in Hugly and President Beard's seal in Calcutta be used for dusticks till our affairs be a little settled."[1] They also decided to postpone payment of the yearly pīshkash due from each of the defunct companies "lest there might follow some ill conveniecy."[2] But this policy was not continued for long. On 24th February, they decided to make a public declaration of the union. The wakīls of both the companies at the faujdār's court were ordered to pay the yearly pīshkash of their respective masters and to declare at the same time that they were discharged of their services and that the United Company would soon appoint their own wakīl "to answer for the English Nation".[3] On 13th March (1704) they

1. Consultations, 5th February, 1704.
2. Ibid., 5th February, 1704.
3. Consultations, 24th February, 1704.

agreed to use their own seal on the dastaks, a practical application of the right they inherited from their predecessors.[1] Thus strengthened, they now turned their attention to getting a sanad from Murshid Quli Khan as the means of having the union recognised.

Negotiations for securing a sanad

In March, 1704, the faujdar of Hugli was asked by the subahdar to send the wakils of the European companies to Rajmahal.[2] The English therefore appointed one Ramchand as their wakil[3] and on 27th March the wakil was sent with directions to declare to the officers at Hugli that he was appointed wakil in Hugli for affairs of the English, to desire the faujdar to write to the prince and the diwan in their favour and to declare that "both presidents are displaced and that there is one English Company who have appointed a council to manage their affairs". On 20th May, 1704, the Council were informed that Murshid Quli Khan was returning from Cuttack to Bengal and had already marched two stages and that Mir Ibrahim, the faujdar of Hugli was proceeding to meet the diwan on his way at Midnapur.[4] The English appointed one Rajaram their wakil to meet the diwan at Burdwan on his way back from Cuttack.

---

1. Consultations, 13th March, 1704.
2. Ibid., 21st March, 1704.
3. Ibid., 27th March, 1704.
4. Ibid., 20th May & 8th June, 1704.

Rājārām was given the following instructions:

1. "By order from England the two companies are united here and their affairs managed by eight persons of council; that at present there is no chief appointed but possibly by next shipping there may be.
2. "As for the piscash formerly there was several times three thousand rupees paid, by sundry English,-when the companies paid theirs, but our grant from the Mogull is for three thousand rupees per annum and no more and as there is but one factory and one company, we expect to pay no more.
3. "The grants and privileges being all of the same tenor, except the grant for the three towns, that the old grants be shown if demanded by which means to stave off the demand of six thousand rupees, which was paid by the Old and the New Company together.
4. "As for the former demand of fifteen thousand rupees on account of the releasement of our trade, amounting to no more than opening our warehouses, spoiling our goods that were in them, which had been sealed up a year and the putting our servants into prison, consequently we had no great benefit from it, we being continually disturbed in our trade, and at present, we are impeded by petty officers, such as teesury [treasury]

and other mutsuddies; for which reason we have lessened our trade, so no such sum as fifteen thousand rupees is to be expected from us having never engaged ourselves for it."

5. "That he endeavour to procure the duan's perwana, but in no other form than formerly" [i.e. the parwānah granting them privilege of trade for the three provinces of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa].[1]

On 26th September, Rājārām informed the Council that the Dutch had already satisfied the dīwān and the prince and got their parwānah, and that the dīwān's under-officers had asked him to satisfy the dīwān likewise. The Council wrote badk to the wakīl emphasising their former instructions and at the same time asking him "to procure his perwana first advising us the exact amount of what the present to the prince himself and all other charges will be and if it be not unreasonable we will send it".[2] On the 27th October, 1704, the Council received a letter from Rājārām saying that the dīwān will take money and not presents in goods and that he will take Rs. 30,000 for the treasury not for the prince. Rājārām, however, expects to bring out a settlement with Rs. 15,000.[3] The Council,

---

1. Consultations, 14th June, 1704.
2. Ibid., 29th September, 1704.
3. Consultations, 27th October, 1704.

therefore, authorized Rājārām to offer the dīwān "as far as" Rs. 15,000 and to insert Patna in the parwānah if possible.[1] By January, 1705, the negotiations came to a fruitless end, the wakīl returned, the dīwān not permitting him to enter his presence before he had paid a present. The wakīl however reported that the dīwān's mutasaddīs had asked him to pay Rs. 20,000 to the dīwān who would then issue a parwānah "in no other terms than Kefait Cawns [Kifāyat Khān's] a former duan was."[2] The Council sent the wakīl back to the dīwān's camp authorising him to offer twenty thousand rupees to the dīwān for his parwānah inserting Bihar and Orissa also.[3]

While the negotiations with the dīwān were proving a long drawn one, the Council was determined to finish it as soon as possible, because the annual pīshkash would soon become due; while the Council wanted to pay only Rs. 3,000 they were apprehending that the government demand would be Rs. 6,000. Moreover, if once they paid Rs. 6,000 it would create a bad precedent and it would be difficult to retract from it. The Council therefore wrote

---

1. Ibid., 30th October, 1704.
2. Ibid., 22nd January, 1704; Kifāyat Khān was the dīwān of Bengal and Orissa till 1690 and his parwānah gave the English trade privilege for Bengal and Orissa only.
3. Ibid.,

to one Mānikchānd Sāhā, an influential shroff in the dīwān's camp and friendly to the English, to sound the dīwān in their favour. The reply from Mānikchānd was not encouraging. The Council therefore authorised Rājārām to spend Rs. 25,000 including the incidental charges[1] and sent him a letter (of credit) on Mānikchānd for Rs.20,000. A small present was also sent to Mānikchānd and the dīwān's under officers for their services in getting the dīwān's sanad.[2]

During this time the negotiations took a different turn. The wakīl wrote that the dīwān wanted to see the original sanad of Kifāyat Khān and Mānikchānd wrote that the letter given to him for Rs. 20,000 was not a letter of credit but a recommendation.[3] The Council wrote that, "we are not willing to send Kefait Cawn's original sunud out of our factory lest by some accident it be lost but desire the duan will send some trusty man to see it here and we will pay the expenses of his journey, our reason for this answer is the doubt we have that the duan may neither return that to us, nor give us another. As for the letter of credit we will send a bill of exchange to the vacqill as soon as our business is effected."[4] The earlier part of

1. Consultations, 12th February, 1705.
2. Ibid., 23rd February, 1705.
3. Consultations, 12th March, 1705.
4. Ibid.,

the Council's anwer is quite reasonable but the latter part shows that they questioned the honesty of the dīwān. They were also unwilling to pay the agreed sum in advance to their friend Mānikchānd. What led the Council to cast doubt on the fidelity of the dīwān is not known. As far as his relations and negotiations with the English are concerned, there is nothing on record to show that the dīwān ever broke his promises. Be that as it may, the dīwān was not the person to submit to the Council. Rājārām wrote back from the dīwān's camp that the dīwān would by no means be persuaded to give his sanad without seeing the original of Kifāyat Khān.[1] The Council therefore "after mature consideration finding this the only means to procure it and that it is absolutely necessary for the United Company's future trade; conclude and unanimously agree that the original sunnud be sent by the hands of the Company's oikoon /ākhūnd/ Fasseel Mahmod /Fāḍil Muḥammad/."[2] On 5th April (1705) the ākhūnd proceeded to the dīwān's camp with the original sanad of Kifāyat Khān and Ibrāhīm Khān[3] and on 23rd April (1705) he returned to Calcutta with the original sanad together with a letter from Rājārām intimating that the dīwān had seen and taken a copy of the sanad and

1. Consultations, 3rd April, 1705.
2. Ibid. The word ākhūnd means a reader. Fāḍil Muḥammad's duty was to read and write the Persian documents.
3. Ibid., 5th April, 1705.

that he had received the bill for Rs. 20,000, which he would make use of.[1] By 12th May, 1705, the Council received letters from Rājārām and Mānikchānd to the following effect: "Copy of the nashan [nishān] of Phidicauns (Fidāi Khān's) perwana and of Hagee Mahmad's [Ḥājī Maḥmūd's] perwana were shown by Manikchund to the duan conformable to which we desire the duan's sunnud but he answers he will give a sunnud conformable to the husbulhookum, on the back of Kefait Cawns perwana, and if we have any other command from the king's presence including the three provinces he will give a sunnud conformable to it. But if we have not, he will not give us such sunnuds as other men have done. They had several times petitioned the duan, in hopes he would comply but he answered they might if they please return our bill of exchange and Rojeram had leave to return from the camp to us."[2] On 17th May, 1705, Rājārām returned to Calcutta and "brought back our bill of exchange for twenty thousand rupees we sent him."[3] The Council now lost all hope of getting a sanad from the dīwān. They therefore ordered Rājārām to accompany the dīwān to Patna (whither they heard the dīwān was going), where the wakīl "is to make interest with the prince, to engage him by his authority to grant us the sunnud desired."[4]

1. Consultations, 23rd April, 1705.
2. Ibid., 12th May, 1705.
3. Ibid., 17th May, 1705.
4. Ibid.

In the meantime, the Council had heard from one Khwājah ʿĀbid, an Armenian merchant, that the dīwān had asked his brother, Khwājah Dailān, to intimate the English that he would give a sanad to the English on receipt of Rs. 20,000 provided the English resettled the Qasimbazar factory.[1] The Council authorised the Armenians to carry on negotiations with the dīwān,[2] but not hearing from them till the 29th August, sent Rājārām again to the dīwān "with full power to agree for the same on the best terms he can, and if the duan will not include the province of Bihar to take a sunnud for Bengal and Orixa according to the tenor of Kefait Cawn's sunnund". He was authorised to spend upto Rs. 25,000.[3] The wakīl had an interview with the dīwān and the result of his discussion with the dīwān was sent in a letter to the Council. The substance of the letter gives us an idea of the dīwān's point of view in the matter. "The duan asked him what his business was, he answered that the Council agreed to give him twenty thousand rupees which sum the duan did formerly demand for the sunnud before he would grant it and that he hoped the duan would please to give a sunnud agreeable with the princes nashan, the duan replied what is written in the nashan, to which

---

1. Ibid., 4th July, 1705.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 29th August, 1705.

the vacqill answered that the subahship of Bengal and Bahar are included in it. The duan again replied that the subahship of Bahar was not under the prince's government and how could he include that province in his nashan, wereupon the vacqill answered that the prince's nashan was an accustomary including that province as other sunnuds did. The duan answered it was unaccountable and without reason, and he resolved to take sixty thousand rupees from the English, Dutch and French which the prince knows of, which 15,000 rupees from the Dutch, 15,000 rupees from the French and 15,000 from each of the two English Companies. The vacqill replied that there is now but one established English Company. The duan then asked who made the two Companies one, to which the vacqill answered that they were united by their king's order. The duan replied I shall not concern myself whether they are two or one Company but I will have thirty thousand rupees from the English which if they pay I will give them a sunnud conformable to Kefait Cawns."[1] The Council "considering that the petre-boats from Patna is daily expected down which petre he will stop and then must not only be forced to pay his demand but also loose a great deal of time," authorised the wakīl to offer the dīwān thirty thousand rupees for the sanad conformable to Kifāyat Khān's parwānah.[2] Four days later, the Council were informed from Patna that the dīwān's Mutasaddī and the prince had given dastak for their petre-boats going down to Hugli,[3] at which the Council revised

1. Consultations, 18th October, 1705.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 22nd October, 1705.

their decision of paying thirty thousand rupees to the dīwān. The Council adopted therefore the following resolution. "It is not positively certain whether the duan will order the stoppage of it at Rajahmal or Muxosabad when it shall be arrived so far, a debate is therefore reassumed about our resolution in last consultation to comply with the duan's unreasonable demand of thirty thousand rupees to be paid him for his sunnud. If we could be certain he resolves to cancel his mutsuddis dustick without regard to the authority he invested in him to grant dusticks and stamp them with the duan's own seal left with him for that purpose, we ought certainly to confirm our last resolution. But if we suppose the duan will not be guilty of so dishonorable an action we may reasonably suspend that resolution till further consideration and possibly prevail with the duan to stand to his former demand of sicca rupees twenty thousand and give us his sunnud for the sum or delay giving him anything till our ships are dispatched after which we may protract the time till the arrival of fresh shipping from England if he does not comply and [if] in the interim he happens to be removed from Bengal the money is saved ... 'tis therfore resolved ordering the vacqill to delay to comply till we hear it is arrived at Rajahmal, and then if the duan stops it it will be time enough to comply."[1] Ultimately

1. Consultations, 22nd October, 1705.

the petre-boats reached Hugli safely[2] and the dīwān did not become guilty of the dishonest act of stopping them on the way. The sum of thirty thousand rupees was also saved.

The curtain was again raised in March, 1706. On 11th March, Rājārām wrote from the dīwān's camp that the dīwān was willing to give a sanad provided the English re-settled the Qasimbazar factory. But the Council decided to wait for advice from Surat, and asked the wakīl "to prolong the time".[3] The Council also wrote a letter to the dīwān to the effect that "upon the encouragement he has given us we design to settle Cassimbazar, on the arrivall of our shipping and in the meantime we shall send up our people to repair our factory, hoping therefore the continuance of his favours in forwarding all our affairs".[4] In the mean-time pressure came from another direction. On 17th June, the Council received a letter from their factors at Patna saying that Murshid Qulī Khān "still holds the duanship of Bahar" and that though they received verbal order from the dīwān's deputy to trade as formerly, they were apprehending stoppage of their business. They therefore urged the Council to procure the dīwān's sanad.[5] Upon receipt of this letter the Council again decided to continue negotiations with

2. Consultations, 30th October, 6th November, 1705.
3. Ibid., 11th March, 1706.
4. Ibid., 22nd April, 1706.
5. Ibid., 17th June, 1706.

the dīwān for procuring his sanad. They first wrote to Mānikchānd, their friendly shroff, to procure a sanad from the dīwān for free trade in Bihar.[1] The result was encouraging. Mānikchānd wrote back that the dīwān had already ordered his deputy at Patna "to permit our business to pass as formerly" and the English actually received a parwānah from Muḥammad Yūsuf, Murshid Qulī Khān's deputy in Bihar.[2] The English also continued the negotiations with the dīwān for a sanad through Khwājah Dailān, an Armenian merchant at Murshidabad. On 25th November, 1706, both Mānikchānd and Khwājah Dailān informed the Council that "the duan is willing to grant usual favours and designs to send his passport with horsemen and foot to tend what Englishman we shall appoint to go to Cassimbazar".[3] On 13th December, 1706, the Council nominated Messrs Bugden and Feak to go to Qasimbazar to resettle the factory[4]; on 9th January, 1707, Khwājah Dailān came with the dīwān's passport, horsemen and peons to escort the factors to Qasimbazar[5], and on 17th January, they started for Qasimbazar.[6] The long-protracted negotiations which had begun in 1704 were about to come to a successful conclusion, but before the necessary preliminaries were complete, the

1. Consultations, 20th June, 1706.
2. Ibid., 12th, 18th July, 1706.
3. Ibid., 25th November, 1706.
4. Ibid., 13th December, 1706.
5. Ibid., 9th January, 1707.
6. Ibid., 17th January, 1707.

news of the death of Aurangzīb had reached Bengal. The Calcutta Council out of fear of a war of succession and resultant chaos in the country called back Messrs Bugden and Feak immediately to Calcutta. The negotiations therefore came to a fruitless end.

In the long-drawn negotiations the points of difference between the dīwān and the English deserve notice. The English asked for a sanad for free trade in the three provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Initially they were unwilling to make any payment beyond presenting the dīwān with goods. The dīwān on the other hand refused to recognise the union of the two Companies and demanded Rs. 30,000, Rs. 15,000 from each. Secondly, he was willing to give a sanad conformable to Kifāyat Khān's, i.e. for Bengal and Orissa only. The dīwān also questioned the authority of the sūbahdār for giving a nishān for Bihar, which was outside his jurisdiction. He was agreeable to give a sanad for Bihar if the English could obtain an imperial farmān for that province. Later on, the dīwān urged the English to resettle the Qasimbazar factory. The English gradually yielded to the dīwān's demand for Rs. 30,000, but the dīwān maintained throughout his original proposal of giving a sanad for Bengal and Orissa only. The difference was therefore on a technical ground. One point, however, strikes our attention, the English never referred to the imperial

farmān in spite of the fact that the dīwān agreed to give them a sanad for Bihar if they had any grant of privilege for that province from the emperor's presence.

The English inability to quote the imperial farmān may be explained as follows: Aurangzīb's farmān dated 1680 was ambiguous and liable to different interpretations.[1] While the English interpreted it to mean that they were exempted from customs in all ports except Surat, the Mughal officers interpreted it as meaning that they had been liable to pay customs in all ports including Surat. The other farmān dated 1690 granted privilege of free trade to the English on payment of Rs. 3,000 per year. But as the farmān was addressed to the sūbahdār and dīwān of Bengal and Orissa,[2] it was applied to Bengal and Orissa alone and the English had obtained a parwānah from the sūbahdār and dīwān of Bengal and Orissa. Bihar was therefore excluded. The only grant including the three provinces that the English could quote was that of Shāh Shujā' issued in 1653 but Murshid Qulī Khān was too shrewd to take it into cognizance, because Shāh Shujā' had issued the grant when merely a governor, before the accession of Aurangzīb.

---

1. Wilson, I, pp. 78-79; Stewart: History of Bengal, Appendix V.
2. Stewart: History of Bengal, Appendix IX.

Modern writers fail to follow the details of the negotiations between Murshid Qulī Khān and the English. Wilson terms the negotiations as "the higgling and huckstering which regularly characterises Indian negotiations"[1] and Miss Anjali Sen simply follows Wilson.[2] But as mentioned, the difference was on a technical ground which has so far been left unnoticed by modern scholars.

Relations with the faujdār of Hugli

While the negotiations with the dīwān were going on, the relations of the English with the government in general seem to have been friendly. The relation with the faujdār of Hugli, the nearest officer to the Company's headquarters, was cordial. The faujdār and his officers were kept in good humour by sending them presents at intervals.[3] On one occasion, the faujdār also sent presents to the Council on the occasion of the birth of his grandson.[4] There were also occasional exchanges of visits between the English and the faujdār of Hugli.[5] There are also examples of mutual cooperation between the English and the officers of Hugli in maintaining peace. The English, for example, helped the faujdār in detecting a criminal, one Nainsookh

1. Wilson, I, p. 170.
2. Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol XXXV, pp. 20-21.
3. c.f. Consultations, 31st July, 1704 & 8th October, 1704; 25th June, 1705; 29th Oct., 1705; 18th July, 1706.
4. Consultations, 20th Secptember, 1705.
5. Ibid., 5th October, 1704; 9th July, 1706.

Pundee, who defrauded the government out of money and took shelter in Calcutta.[1] On another occasion, the English helped the faujdār with lashkars (soldiers) in removing some guns which were about to tumble down into the river.[2] The English paid their revenues for the three towns regularly. As for the pīshkash though at first Rs. 6,000 were demanded, Rs. 3,000 were accepted in the long run.[3]

Though the relationship was generally friendly, there were occasional cases of complaints against one another. The Hugli government complained of the abuse of the English power to issue dastaks by the Company. The Consultations of the English Council in Calcutta record the action taken by them in stopping the abuse. On 8th July, 1704, it was reported that the Mughal government had detected that the goods of Indian merchants had been carried to Bengal by an English ship from Surat. The Council resolved that the goods be reloaded and taken to Hugli for accounting before the government. They also wrote to their wakīl at Hugli to inform the government officers that the goods had been brought without the knowledge of the Council.[4] On 31st July, the Council made a rule that "all dusticks be hereafter numbered in words at length and not figures to prevent

1. Consultations, 14th September, 1704.
2. Ibid., 31st July, 1704.
3. Ibid., 3rd April, 16th April, 23rd April, 26th April, 1705 22nd April, 1706.
4. Ibid., 8th July, 1704.

the Indians (who understand our figures) knowing the number of dusticks we give out".[1] Another complaint was made in September of the same year. The Council investigated the matter and found that Captain Wibergh, commander of the ship Rising Sun, brought from Madras "seven passengers, cash one thousand rupees, three small chests of China ware, one box, ten glass hubblebubles" and "ordered to be sent to the Company's vacqill in Hugly to acquaint the government, if they make the king's duties and to show them that we in no manner defraud the king of his customs".[2] In March, 1705, the Council made the following rules to prevent the abuse of dastaks: -[3]

"2. To prevent abuse of our dusticks in Hugly ordered that the vacqill constantly send us an account of what quantity of goods are aboard of every boat he clears from Hugly meerbar [mir-i-bahr], for this place and that Mr. Robert Nightingale, Mr. George Redshaw, Mr Benjamin Bowcher and Mr. Edward Pattle compare that account with the goods when they arrive here by which means we shall discover if any part is landed elsewhere on the way hither.

"3. Ordered that a paper be fixt on the factory gate prohibiting any man's procuring dusticks for goods not for his own accounts or for account of some other

---

1. Ibid., 31st July, 1704. 2. Ibid., 7th September, 1704.
3. Ibid., 26th March, 1705.

English under the Company's protection.

"4. Ordered that all boats come to the bridge before the factory to be examined there before they are carried elsewhere to be landed and that from eight o'clock in the morning till ten be the sett hours for examining the goods. If any goods come and are landed without the dusticks, ordered that the particular account of the same be given to the Councill on the consultation day next following."

In spite of these rules a case of abuse of dastak occured in July, 1705. Captain Alexander Hamilton[1] brought from Madras three ships under his command which carried goods belonging to native merchants. One of the ships, Vintegurry belonged to a native merchant Venidas Temidas of Surat. The Council ordered that "an account of goods aboard the Vintegurry both what belongs to English and to Moors be sent to the governour [faujdār] of Hugly also of all goods belonging to Moors aboard the Buckhurst and St. George [the other two ships] and that the vacqill acquaint the governour that we made strict enquiry into every circumstance relating to these ships; being fully resolved not to protect any goods but what belong to the English".[2]

1. The author of A New Account of the East Indies.
2. Consultations, 5th July, 1705.

The Consultation dated 31st July, 1704, ordering the dastaks to be numbered in words seems odd. Its real implication is not clear because all other Consultations show that the Council tried most earnestly to stop the abuse of dastak. It is mainly due to the vigilance of the Council that the complaints regarding the abuse of dastak did not take a serious turn during this period. From the side of the English there were two complaints to the government of Hugli, of the insulting their wakil and of the stopping of their trade by petty officers. On both occasions, the faujdār satisfied them and promised his help in future and so the questions were dropped.[1]

Passage of the saltpetre boats from Patna

The Patna factory was closed after the execution of Aurangzīb's farmān in 1702. But in 1704, when Murshid Qulī Khān became the dīwān of Bihar, he invited the English to resettle their factory at Patna.[2] On 14th August, 1704, the Council decided to reopen the Patna factory and necessary arrangements were made.[3] In 1705, the Patna factors apprehended that their petre-boats would be stopped, but as has been seen the boats were allowed to go down to Hugli. In 1706 again during the season, the factors apprehended the

1. Ibid., 14th November, 1704; 4th June, 1706.
2. Ibid., 21st February, 1704.
3. Ibid., 14th August, 1704.

same trouble.[1] The Council wrote to their friend Mānikchānd to procure a sanad from the dīwān for Bihar[2] and on 25th November, 1706, the Council were informed that the dīwān had already sent orders for clearing the boats.[3] But before the dīwān took action there had been a skirmish between the English escorts of petre-boats and a chaukī (guard-house for receiving customs) in which some English soldiers had been injured and some of the chaukī's peons had been killed.[4] The Council sent a petition to the dīwān praying for action against the miscreants.[5] What was the result of their petition is not known, but no further trouble is on record. After the death of Aurangzīb and taking advantage of the war of succession, Prince Karīm al-Dīn tried to extort money from the English and other European traders.[6] The English sent a petition to the dīwān requesting him to intervene in the matter and at the same time threatened that if they "are plundered in Pattna, we will take satisfaction in Hugly".[7] What action the dīwān took is not known, but no harm was done to the English in Patna. After the battle of Jajau in June, 1707, when Bahādur Shāh came out victorious over Āẓam Shāh, Murshid Qulī Khān was removed from Bengal.

1. Consultations, 31st October, 1706. 2. Ibid. 1706
3. Ibid., 25th November, 1706. 4. Ibid., 29th November,
5. Ibid. 6. Ibid., 12th May, 1707. Wilson (Wilson I, p.178) attributes this to Prince Aẓīm al-Shān, but Aẓīm al-Shān had left Patna before Aurangzīb's death and while he was near Agra he heard that Aurangzīb had died.
7. Ibid., 3rd June, 1707.

The above discussion leads us to conclude that Murshid Quli Khān's relations with the English were moulded by the outlook of a financier and a civil servant. As a financier, he must have realised the importance of foreign trade in the country's economy, hence he urged the English to resettle the Patna and Qasimbazar factories. As a civil servant he looked to the granting of the sanad in its technical aspect and demanded money to swell the imperial treasury. Though the negotiations for the sanad were protracted, the English trade was not stopped. Again, though Murshid Quli Khan did not formally recognise the union of the two companies, he allowed the faujdār of Hugli to accept the yearly pīshkash at Rs. 3,000. To say that Murshid Quli Khān set at naught all the privileges that the English had secured since the time of Prince Shujā', is therefore to ignore facts and to term the negotiations as the traditional higgling and huckstering of the oriental court, is to overlook the main points at issue.

Section II

THE POSITION OF THE ENGLISH DURING THE ABSENCE OF MURSHID QULĪ KHĀN, 1708-09

On the death of Aurangzīb, the English in Calcutta feared a revolution in the country and confusion in their business.[1] They withdrew from their negotiations with Murshid Qulī Khān, without making any further attempt to bring it to a successful conclusion.[2] The union of the two Companies remained unrecognised at least in theory, though their trade continued as usual. But the death of Aurangzīb presented a fresh problem to the English in Bengal. What would be the fate of their former privileges granted by the late emperor? Would they be confirmed by the new administration or would the Company be obliged to obtain a fresh farmān from the new emperor? As will be seen hereafter, the English were fully aware of the problem facing them. They first took steps to secure their effects and guard their towns and then awaited negotiations with whatever administration might emerge.

Steps to secure the Company's effects

In a hurriedly convened Consultation, the Council ordered all their factors to come back to Calcutta with as

1. Consultations, 3rd April, 1707.
2. Ibid., 7th April, 1707.

much of their effects as possible. All investments by out-factories were stopped. They arranged for the purchase of five thousand maunds of rice and of one thousand maunds of wheat to provide for the garrison. Sixty native soldiers were recruited to guard the town and factory at Calcutta.[1] The English also took advantage of the political situation in the country to construct two regular bastions in the fort, "the emperor being dead, and now being the properest time to strengthen our fort, whilst there is an interregnum and no one likely to take notice of what we are doing."[2] Having made these internal arrangements, the Council awaited the outcome of events.

Negotiations for a sanad

New administrative arrangements were made soon after the battle of Jajau in June, 1707.[3] By the beginning of the next year, 1708, the new officers of the Bengal administration had reached their respective stations. The English therefore renewed their attempt to procure a sanad from the new officers.

Towards the beginning of 1708, the English received an order from Ḍiyā'Allāh Khān, the new dīwān, "ordering that we should send our vacqill to wait on him

1. Consultations, 3rd, 7th, 17th April, 18th May, 1707.
2. Ibid., 28th April, 1707.
3. Supra, pp. 50-51.

and take out a new sunnud". As Rājārām, their old wakīl, had died in 1707, they appointed one Śivacharan, to attend on the dīwān and Farrukh Siyar.[1] The wakīl was sent to Rajmahal with presents for the prince and his under-officers, and with copies of the sanads they had obtained before.[2] The wakīl was given the following instructions: -

> ".....that when he gets such a grant if it be after the tenour [of the] said perwana as for the privileges, copy of which he has with him and should they insist of having the new king's phermaunds (as 'tis very probable they will) that he promises it shall be procured in time, having wrote to our head factories from whence some persons will be sent to procure his general phermaund for all our settlements in his dominions and in case they should demand a moselka [bond], that the phermaund should arrive in a certain limited time, if not that we should make good the king's customs for which we have traded for in the interim (as 'tis usual for them to demand) by no manner of means to give such a moselka agreed thereto, lest it prove of very ill consequence in the end to compleat this affair, we expect it may cost the Company considerable presents which if they come to propose, he is

---

1. Consultations, 26th April, 1708. For Rājārām's services to the Company see Chapter IV, Section I.
2. Ibid.

to advise us forthwith and for what present or sum these our desired grants are to be procured for, and weekly gives us advice of all occurences, that he is not to agree to anything without first advising us the particulars and having our immediate and express orders to send us copies of what grants they are willing to give."[1]

From their instructions it is clear that the English were aware that the death of Aurangzīb had invalidated all their previous privileges and that they would have to obtain a fresh farmān from the new emperor. They were also aware that they would have to spend a considerable amount of money in procuring the nishān from the prince or sanad from the dīwān. But in spite of their awareness, it was the amount of money that hindered any settlement with the prince and the dīwān and as ~~was~~ in the case of Murshid Qulī Khān the negotiations were long and protracted.

Sivacharan, the wakīl, wrote from Rajmahal on 24th June, 1708 that the prince had demanded the usual presents formerly made to his father ⌈Aẓīm al-Shān⌋ and Rs. 2,000 for his officers.[2] This term of the prince is vague, because the English had paid several sums to

---

1. Consultations, 26th April, 1708.
2. Consultations, 30th June, 1708.

ʿAẓīm-al-Shān, none of them less than Rs. 15,000.[1] The Council, however, sent to the wakīl a bill for Rs. 1,500, though they pressed him to conclude the affair as urgently as possible.[2] The note of urgency followed from the discovery by the English that peace was going rapidly to be reestablished in the empire, contrary to their expectations, and that their trade in Bengal was unlikely to be interrupted. The need to regularise their position was emphasised by the action of the new faujdār of Hugli in threatening to impede their trade if they did not produce a grant from the prince or the dīwān. Śivacharan, however, could not manage the affairs as speedily as they urged him to do. He wrote back that he was informed by Sadānanda, the mutaṣaddī of the prince and the dīwān, that Ḍiyāʾ Allāh Khān, being the son of a vizier[3] would demand more money than the former dīwāns for granting his sanad for free trade. The Council sent a further bill of exchange for Rs. 15,000 and ordered him to procure the grant even "with something more".[4] A few days later the wakīl wrote that the Dutch had paid the prince and the dīwān Rs. 35,000

1. As far as our knowledge goes, the Old Company paid Rs. 16,000 to ʿAẓīm al-Shān in 1698 for procuring his nishān giving them the right to rent the Calcutta towns (Wilson I, p. 150) and the New Company paid twice, once Rs. 70,000 and the second time Rs. 15,000 (see Supra, p.166)
2. Consultations, 30th June, 1708. Wilson says that they sent Rs. 15,000 (Wilson I, p. 296, Summaries No.244) but that is incorrect.
3. He was the son of ʿInāyat Allāh Khān, minister of Aurangzīb and Bahādur Shāh.
4. Consultations, 15th July, 1708.

and that they would expect the same amount from the English as well. The Council considered the demand very unreasonable and ordered the wakīl to offer Rs. 20,000 and to return to Calcutta, if they should insist on more.[1] But to their utter surprise the Council found that Śivacharan had drawn a bill on them for Rs. 36,000 and in a letter informed them that the money had been drawn for procuring the prince's nishān and the dīwān's sanad.[2] The Council took it to be "a very great sum and what was positively contrary to our orders, having limited him to twenty five thousand rupees, but considering the season of the year draws near for the dispatch of our shipping and our goods coming in daily and not willing to have our business stopped at this juncture of time, and also say that the grants from the prince's and king's duan will be such that we shall not have any occasion for the emperor's phirmaund, agreed that we accept the bill of exchange of Rs. 36,000 to make the same good when we received the princes and duan's grants for our free trade in Bengal as customary."[3] This decision of the Council only to pay the bill after receiving the grants of the prince and the dīwān proved extremely wise because no such grant had been received.

---

1. Consultations, 9th August, 1708.
2. Ibid., 1st, 6th September, 1708.
3. Ibid., 6th September, 1708.

by the wakīl. The Council at the same time suspected that "our vacqill has not dealt fairly with us" and they decided to send Fāḍil Muḥammad, their ākhūnd, a more trustworthy fellow with orders to inquire into Śivacharan's conduct of business and to send the latter down to Calcutta.[1] Fāḍil Muḥammad on reaching the court of the prince and the dīwān found that Śivacharan's dealings had all been fraudulent and that he had not received any grant from the prince or the dīwān. The new wakīl therefore himself tried to negotiate the matter but could not achieve any success. The mutaṣaddīs of the prince and the dīwān told him that the English could procure a sanad if they agreed to pay Rs. 50,000 to the prince and the dīwān and to provide a bill of exchange for one hundred thousand more, payable to the emperor's treasury at Surat. Considering that the demand was exorbitant, the ākhūnd returned to Calcutta.[2]

Wilson does not follow the details of the negotiations but terms them "the usual higgling and blustering" and dramatises it as follows:[3]

> "'Fifteen thousand rupees', said the Council, 'for your order; otherwise we retaliate'.
>
> 'Impossible', said the Prince and the Treasurer.

---

1. Consultations, 6th, 15th September, 1708.
2. Ibid., 22nd October, 1708.
3. Wilson, I, p. 180.

> We have sent up another fifteen thousand rupees and three looking glasses, one for His Highness and two for Your Excellency'.
>
> 'The Dutch have given us thirty five thousand rupees for their privileges, and we think that you should do the same.'
>
> 'Thirty five thousand rupees will ruin us', cried the Council; 'indeed we cannot possibly give more than twenty thousand.'"

Wilson fails to notice that the whole proceedings as reported to the Council by Śivacharan were fraudulent and that he did nothing to procure the sanad. In fact, the demand of the prince and the dīwān was much higher, as was reported by Fāḍil Muḥammad. Wilson's statement is also contradictory. On the one hand, he says that the Council sent Rs. 30,000, Rs. 15,000 each time, on the other hand, he says that the Council were not willing to pay more than Rs. 20,000. In fact, the Council paid Rs. 15,00 at the first instance for defraying the wakīl's expenses, and then sent Rs. 15,000 authorising the wakīl to offer Rs. 20,000 at the most. But the greatest mistake committed by Wilson is that he charges Aʿẓīm al-Shān and Murshid Qulī Khān with these proceedings.[1] He therefore fails to note

---

1. Wilson I, pp. 180-82.

that ʿAẓīm al-Shān had left Bengal towards the beginning of 1707, and never returned afterwards, while Murshid Qulī Khān had been removed from Bengal towards the end of 1707 to come back only two years later, in 1710.

Relations with the Faujdār of Hugli

While the English were negotiating with the prince and the dīwān for a sanad, their relations with the faujdār of Hugli had worsened. The new faujdār, on his arrival at the station at first seemed friendly and offered his help in getting the sanad from the prince and the dīwān.[1] The Council reciprocated his friendliness by offering presents.[2] They appointed one Rājballabh, their wakīl at the faujdār's court at Hugli, and asked him to request the faujdār not to say to the dīwān anything prejudicial to the English.[3] Two Englishmen, Messrs. Sheldon and Nightingale were also sent to visit the faujdār, who carried "with them the prince's oroginall neshawn [nishān], and Nabob Ebraheim Cawn [Nawāb Ibrāhīm Khān] and Duan Kefait Cawn's [Dīwān Kifāyat Khān's] originall grants to show the governour of Hugly, that he may acquaint the King's duan (when he goes) of the privileges we have always enjoied and that he has

1. Consultations, 18th February, 1708.
2. Ibid., 18th, 23rd February, 1708.
3. Ibid., 18th, 23rd February, 1708.

seen our originall grants and may prevent our sending the originall to the duan".[1] But these attempts did not bear any fruit. They were soon informed from Hugli that the faujdār "sent for our native merchants and wanted them to give an obligation not to trade with us".[2] The Council ordered their wakīl to "know the meaning why he wants an obligation from the merchants and for what reasons he stops our trade".[3] The wakīl was also instructed "to make some proposals to the governour of Hugly of procuring the duan's sunnud and on what terms his favour is to be purchased".[4] But a week later, the Council decided to negotiate with the prince and the dīwān direct and as has been mentioned earlier, actually appointed Śivacharan, their wakīl to represent them before the prince and the dīwān.[5] Accordingly, they wrote to the faujdār "to excuse negotiating the affair with the duan by his means" desiring at the same time his letter of recommendation to the prince and the dīwān.[6] But the faujdār was not conciliated with these sweet words; he continued creating obstructions to the English trade. On June 30th, 1708, the Council sent a strong protest to the faujdār against the abuses of the

---

1. Consultations, 18th March, 1708.
2. Ibid, 19th April, 1708.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Supra, p.200.
6. Consultations, 26th April, 1708.

mutasaddīs and at the same time threatened him that if the faujdār did not redress their wrongs they would "take satisfaction some other way".[1] On 5th July, the Council received a reply from the faujdār acknowledging the receipt of their letter but silent about the redressing of their grievances. One English factor and other gumashthas were still imprisoned. Moreover, the faujdār orally threatened the English before the wakīl and other Mughal officers. The Council now decided to take action. They ordered their guards to be ready to meet any emergency and wrote to the wakīl at Rajmahal to lodge a complaint with the prince and the dīwān.[2] As nothing came of this protest, on 10th July the Council took a far stronger decision. "Having summoned all the European and Christian inhabitants and the masters of ships and acquainting them, we expect some trouble from the governour of Hugly, he having imprisoned our people and stopped our goods, we ordered that they forbear to go to Hugly for some time, and that they are in readiness under arms on summons to prevent any insolence he may design upon us, or in case there should be occasion to do anything against him, that they are ready thereto. They all showed a readiness and declared they would be ready on all

1. Consultations, 30th June, 1708.
2. Ibid., 5th July, 1708.

summons. The Ensign having got all the black Christians together, we ordered that they appear under arms once a week to exercise, that they may be in readiness till further orders".[1] It would appear, therefore, that the English were preparing for a war with the faujdār of Hugli. The situation would have taken a more serious turn, in the actual declaration of a war, but for the intervention of a Mughal officer, Mīr Muḥammad Jaʿfar, the qāṣid (messenger) of the prince. He wrote to the Council that he had been to the faujdār of Hugli and had told him that it was not well to interfere with the English and stop their trade. The faujdār had replied and said that the trade had been stopped at the order of the dīwān and the men were imprisoned without his order or knowledge. Mīr Muḥammad Jaʿfar therefore requested the English to stop sending ships to Hugli for a day or two, within which time he hoped to ease the situation.[2] The English were glad to accept his mediation and requested him to ask the faujdār to dismiss those of his servants who had been responsible for imprisoning "our men".[3] It is not certain whether Mīr Muḥammad Jaʿfar was able to bring about a complete settlement, for a few days later another officer,

---

1. Consultations, 10th July, 1708.
2. Ibid., 12th July, 1708.
3. Consultations, 12th July, 1708.

Mīr Muḥammad Riḍā, the commissioner of the prince's revenues in Bengal, is found intervening in the matter. Mīr Muḥammad Riḍā reached Hugli on 26th July. As he was friendly to the English, the Council sent their broker Janārdana Seṭh and ākhūnd, Fāḍil Muḥammad, to visit him and to acquaint him with their ill treatment by the faujdār of Hugli. The mission was successful. Mīr Muḥammad Riḍā advised the faujdār to be friendly to the English and the latter agreed.[1] Soon after, the broker Janārdana Seṭh returned from Hugli with the good news that the faujdār had cleared their goods and "promised that he would clear our business [for] a month longer and that in [the mean] time he hoped we would bring the duan's sunnud".[2] But as has been seen, the English failed to procure a sanad from the prince or the dīwān.[3] They turned, therefore, to the faujdār of Hugli whose offer of his good offices in procuring a sanad for them they had earlier turned down,[4] urging him to procure a sanad for them from the prince and the dīwān. (The Council admits that "this is a very unaccountable method of doing business at the prince's and duan's camp by the governour of Hugly but the Dutch introduced this unaccountable method, which we are obliged to follow, but

---

1. Ibid., 26th July, 1708.
2. Ibid., 9th August, 1708.
3. Supra, p.204.
4. Supra, p.207.

we doubt not but they will find a very great inconvenience to attend their master's affairs by it".)[1] The English probably did not receive much encouragement from the faujdār, for next month, they were to be heard despairing of getting any grant from the government. On 22nd November (1708), the Council took a bold step and passed the following resolution: "We, therefore, judge it expedient to try all possible means to avoid it by putting the best face we can on this affair and use threatening arguments and in short for to stop all the country shipping that are subjects to this government and in the meantime to write to the duan and prince that by the rascality of the Hugly governour we are forced to use this means. Also to acquaint the king's government in Hugly that they note the same to their separate masters at the camp at Rajahmal and Muxodavad and that they may see that we are more intent on this matter that we sent to command all the subjects of Great Brittain, (of which there are a great many in the Moors and Gentue shipping) in a declaration under our hands that they immediately repair to the king's colours and settlement of Great Brittain in Calcutta and that we write to those merchants whom we have desired to negotiate in this affair with the governour of Hugly to desist till our further

---

1. Consultations, 22nd October, 1708.

directions."[1] This strong attitude of the Council bore immediate fruit. Five days later, "the governour of Hugly sent those merchants we employed (to negotiate the clearing the Company's affair in Hugly and in Bengal with the prince and king's duan) to us with a civill message and proposall, that if we would give thirty five thousand rupees sicca he will procure us the prince's neshawn and king's duan's grant, the same as we formerly had in every respect and that we shall be at no further charge for any expenses to the mutsuddies or others and no demand for the bill of exchange to Surat and that we shall have a seerpaw and horse as usuall with all other accustomary signs of respect."[2] The Council "taking into consideration that we may not give any cause to this new king or his government to molest or hinder our affairs in any other of his dominions .... for the satisfaction of the phousdar [faujdār] (he requiring the same) agreed that we give him a note under our hands for the payment of the same sum on receipt of all those grants and immediately clearing our business in Hugly."[3]

Matters appeared at last to be going well. But just a fortnight later, the Council got disquieting news from Rajmahal. Cawthorp, one of the English factors, wrote

---

1. Consultations, 22nd November, 1708.
2. Consultations, 27th November, 1708.
3. Ibid.

that he had drawn a bill of exchange upon Calcutta for Rs. 14,000 and that this was to pay the prince, who had stopped the boats and imprisoned him, and would not release him unless the bill was honoured.[1] The Council dishonoured the bill because they had already agreed to pay Rs. 35,000 through the faujdār of Hugli. They suspected that the faujdār had not informed the prince and the dīwān about the terms of this settlement with the English and so they wrote to the faujdār about the Rajmahal affairs. Simultaneously, the Council also asked their agent in Patna to return to Calcutta.[2] These measures did not bear any fruit. Until 3rd January, 1709, Cawthorp remained imprisoned and the boats stopped, the prince arguing that the faujdār had no right to negotiate. The Council were therefore obliged to honour the bill of exchange for Rs. 14,000 to be paid to the prince[3] and allowed Mr. Lloyd to continue the Patna factory.[4]

The events of 1708, as discussed above, show that the English received much trouble from the faujdār. The exact nature of the trouble and the causes thereof are not clear. The English records state that their native merchants were forced to give obligations not to trade with them and some of their people were actually imprisoned. Basing his

1. Consultations, 13th December, 1708.
2. Ibid.,
3. Ibid., 27th December, 1708 and 3rd January, 1709.
4. Ibid., 28th February, 1709.

account on the records, Wilson blames the "hotheaded phousdar" who impeded the English trade because he was unable "to secure his share of the money which the English were expected to present to the new emperor and the new government".[1] Though the faujdār's point of view is not recorded in the Consultations, his reply to Mīr Muḥammad Jafar, the qāṣid of the prince reveals that he was not prompted merely by his personal interest. The faujdār clearly stated that the English trade was stopped at the dīwān's order and later, on the intercession of Mīr Muḥammad Riḍā he promised to clear the Company's business "a month longer and that in [the mean] time he hoped we would bring the duan's sunnud." The main question was therefore whether the English were to be allowed trade on payment of a fixed sum as before or they were to be compelled to procure fresh grants confirming their former privileges. In fact, during this time a legal question came to the forefront. The Emperor Aurangzīb, from whom the English had obtained the farmāns was now dead. Since the accession of Bahādur Shāh the English had received no farmān granting them trade privileges. The English were aware of this position and realised that the Mughal officers in Bengal were taking advantage of this situation. The English therefore tried to procure a sanad from the prince or the dīwān

1. Wilson I, p. 179.

confirming their former privileges and the officers were also willing to give the same. But the main question was the amount of money to be paid for the sanad. The English naturally tried to pay as little as possible while the officers wanted to get as much as possible. The faujdār also offered his good offices to procure for the English the grants from the prince and the dīwān, but as mentioned above, his offer was not accepted, first by the English and then by the prince. While the English refused to pay the high amount demanded by the prince and the dīwān, the only policy of the latter's officers to compel them to pay was to stop the trade and the task of executing this policy devolved on the faujdār who was immediately responsible for looking to the king's customs.

The most important fact to be noted during this period is the resolution of the English to take the offensive against the Mughal government in Bengal. They had two great advantages in their favour. First, from their newly strengthened fort, they could control the shipping down the river and secondly, many Englishmen were then serving in the country ships as pilots and masters. The English were therefore in a position to stop all country ships going down the river and to paralyse many others by calling back the Englishmen serving in them. They also considered the Calcutta towns as a "settlement of Grat Brittain in Calcutta".

The rapid decline of the Mughal empire and particularly the war of succession after the death of Aurangzīb must have emboldened them to take these positive actions against the government, to bring the latter round to their own point of view. It will be seen later that from this time onward, the English had recourse to these measures whenever they considered the situation demanded. This really marks a decisive change of English attitude towards the country's government. The exposure of the weakness of the government was detrimental to the country's interest. How powerful the English became during this time, will be evident from the following case of the Kiddirpur chaukī. In April, 1709 some servants of the Company complained that they had been "affronted and abused very much by the Kidderpore chowki". The Council decided to send "thirty soldiers and twenty black gunmen to fetch some of them up to punish them, so as they may not be so impudent for the future".[1] On 25th April, the soldiers went to Kiddirpur chaukī but "when landed, one of them with cutlass cut one of our sergeants, almost half through his body, but before he fell he shot the man that wounded him dead, upon which our men took several of their people prisoners, and have now brought them before us. We have found six of them that actually opposed our men with drawn swords. We have

1. Consultations, 25th April, 1709.

considered it and believe it will be for the Company's interest to have them severely punished to deter the other troublesom chowkis from committing the like. Agreed that each of them be tied to the post and have 21 strokes with a split of rattan, and be kept for a further punishment."[1]

The chaukīs or custom officials were no doubt from the imperial guard-house and the "affront and abuse" showed by the chaukī to the English was no doubt regarding the customs or inspecting of goods covered by the dastak. Even if the chaukīs had harassed the English, the Council surely exceeded the limit by taking such unilateral action. The legal course was to refer the matter to the faujdār of Hugli. The English were not given the right to punish the king's men by the grants of Aurangzīb. Farrukh Siyar's farmān of 1717 also did not give the English any such right. What was the reaction of the government to this high-handedness of the English is not on record. But the silence of the Calcutta Council and complete absence of any further reference in the Consultations on this subject indicate that the government left the matter to oblivion.

The case of the Kiddirpur chaukī may be compared to that of Nandarām in which the Mughal officer showed a gesture of cooperation with the English. Just a week later than the punishment of the Kiddirpur chaukī, Nandarām, a

---

1. Ibid., 26th April, 1709.

dishonest tax-gatherer of the Calcutta towns fled and took shelter in Hugli. On a representation of the Council, the faujdār of Hugli remanded Nandarām to the English custody.[1] The English had not yet received from the emperor any right over their run-away servants. Nandarām's surrender to the English was therefore a pure gesture of good will. It was probably due to the prospect of an understanding between the English and the government on the arrival of Sarbuland Khān, as the deputy sūbahdār of Bengal.

Sarbuland Khān's relations with the English

On 28th April, 1709, the English first got the intelligence that Sarbuland Khān was coming to Bengal as "chief manager of the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa."[2] A few days later they were asked by some friendly officers in Hugli to send a wakīl to wait on Sarbuland Khān.[3] The Council sent Rājballabh, their wakīl at Hugli, to visit Sarbuland Khān pending the arrival of Durgā Mal (their wakīl at Patna) who having some previous acquaintance with Sarbuland Khān, was considered the fittest man to carry on negotiations with the new deputy sūbahdār. The Council also decided to send one or two Englishmen along with the wakīl and nominated Messrs. Pattle and Eyre for the purpose.[4]

---

1. Consultations, 4th and 12th May, 1709.
2. Consultations, 28th April, 1709.
3. Ibid., 20th May, 1709.
4. Ibid., 20th, 26th, 30th May, 1709.

On 1st June, Sarbuland Khān sent on his own account through a messenger a parwānah to the English "for our business to go on as usual, till we can conveniently send one to him to procure a sunnud".[1] The Council at once sent Edward Pattle to Qasimbazar to visit Sarbuland Khān.[2] What happened for about a month thereafter is not on record but in July (1709) the Council received a letter from Pattle advising that "the Company's boats bound to Patna were stopped at Rajahmal [Rajmahal] and Seer Bulland Cawn [Sarbuland Khān] refused to clear those goods that are now ready at the aurungs; untill we shall take his sunnud upon such terms as the first proposed."[3] What were the terms first proposed by Sarbuland Khān is not known, but upon considering the letter, the Council wrote to Pattle "to gett it upon the best terms he can".[4]

Having been strengthened by the authority of the Council, Pattle started negotiations with Sarbuland Khān. He decided to visit Sarbuland Khān with presents worth about Rs. 3,000 and asked the Council's permission. The Council authorised him to present Sarbuland Khān with goods worth Rs. 2,000.[5] Such a huge present flattered the deputy sūbahdār and Pattle wrote to the Council that the deputy

---

1. Consultations, 15th and 16th June, 1709.
2. Ibid., 16th June, 1709.
3. Ibid., 15th July, 1709.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., 20th August, 1709.

sūbahdār had received him kindly, promised his assistance and ordered the faujdār of Hugli not to molest the Company's affairs.[1] But when the question of granting the sanad came up, Sarbuland Khān was not willing to lower his demand for money and Pattle found himself outwitted. He wrote, "the subah notwithstanding all his promises, positively demands Rs. 45,000 on receipt of which he will give us his perwana, and when the present duan is confirmed or a new one sent, that he will procure us his sunnud, without which he is resolved to admit of no more delays from us but will stop all our business having called all the merchants at Muxodavad to give in an account of what goods they have provided for us in order to their paying custom. The subah further adds that the prince last year forced from our Patna boats 17,000 rupees[2], and if we comply not that we shall see what he can do."[3] "On these advices we meet early this morning to consult what to do in these unsettled times and cannot find any remedy; for since the new king is come to the throne, we have had no order from him to trade as usual which is the advantage the government takes hold of. Therefore, it is resolved we immediately write to Mr. Pattle, ordering him to make an end of it the best way he can, for

1. Consultations, 3rd September, 1709.
2. The prince actually took Rs. 14,000. See supra, p.213.
3. Consultations, 3rd September, 1709.

it is certain if we comply not, the subah will again stop our Patna fleet, which (as the year before) will not be let loose till a large sum is extorted, as also custom to be paid on our goods, which we have bespoke of the Cassimbazar merchants, which will be of very ill consequence."[1] The result was just what they wanted. A few days later, the Council "received a letter from Mr. Pattle at Cassimbazar, enclosing Subah Seer Buland Cawn's perwana for our free trade in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and the subah's particular orders to Hugly and Rajahmal, Dacca and Muxodavad, acquainting them that he had given us a general perwana."[2]

Within a short time after the receipt of the parwānah, Sarbuland Khān was removed from his office in Bengal. The Dīwān Ḍiyā' Allāh Khān, taking advantage of the situation, stopped the Company's boats and demanded Rs. 20,000 for his sanad.[3] The Council was not prepared to let the parwānah be invalidated. They wrote to the faujdār of Hugli "to acquaint him that if the boats of goods that are stopped are not cleared, we will not let any of the Moors' ships pass."[4] They also decided to send forty soldiers and thirty black-gunners under Mr. Spencer and Ensign Dalibar to clear the boats.[5] The situation, however, continued till January,

---

1. Consultations, 3rd September, 1709.
2. Ibid., 29th September, 1709.
3. Consultations, 2nd December, 1709.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

1710. On the 17th of this month some of their goods were stopped at Bidipur and the Council decided to send Mr. Surman and an Ensign to clear the goods.[1] On the same date they received a letter from Pattle at Qasimbazar informing them that the dīwān had sent orders for clearing the boats.[2] A few days later, Ḍiyā' Allāh Khān was killed by the naqdī troopers in the streets of Murshidabad,[3] and on 16th February, Pattle was recalled from Qasimbazar as he had nothing to do till a new dīwān was appointed.[4] Again news was received in March (1710) that the prince had stopped the boats at Rajmahal, at which the Council sent one Muḥammad Āẓam as their wakīl at the prince's darbār.[5] But Lloyd wrote from Patna that "the Patna boats were stopped there by reason that all the officers of the government were gone from that place to meet the prince, who was coming thither and that there was none to give passes."[6] In the same letter Lloyd informed the Council that Murshid Qulī Khān was again appointed dīwān and that he was proceeding towards Bengal.[7]

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that the position of the English had worsened during the absence of Murshid Qulī Khān. The new officers who had replaced Murshid

---

1. Consultations, 17th January, 1710.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 26th January, 1710.
4. Ibid., 16th February, 1710.
5. Ibid., 29th March, 1710.
6. Ibid., 31st March, 1710.
7. Ibid.

Qulī Khān were far more strict that their predecessor. The English paid in all Rs. 59,000 (Rs. 14,000 to Farrukh Siyar and Rs. 45,000 to Sarbuland Khān), in lieu of which they received a parwānah from Sarbuland Khān which was soon liable to invalidation when the granter was removed from his Bengal office. The English were also defrauded of a considerable amount of money by their wakīl Śivacharan.[1]

The chief importance of these two years lies in the fact that in them the English learnt a few lessons which they applied successfully in the later period. In the first place, they realised the efficacy of the retaliatory measures they could take against the Mughal government in Bengal. Their fortifications in Calcutta gave them the controlling position over the native shipping, which they stopped whenever they thought necessary. At times they also tried to paralyse the country ships by recalling the English servants of the native ship owners. Secondly, the English realised the need of negotiating with the dīwān or ṣūbahdār through their own factors. The policy began in 1709 through the negotiations of Pattle with Sarbuland Khān, became an established practice in the succeeding years. As will be

---

1. Śivacharan was paid Rs. 21,500 in all. It is not known whether the Company could recover the money.

seen later, this onerous duty always devolved upon the chief at the Qasimbazar factory. Thirdly, the English realised that instead of procuring a grant from the provincial officers who were always liable to be removed, it was more politic to try to procure an imperial farmān. This policy engaged the attention of the English in Bengal during the few years to come.

Section III

THE RECEIPT OF AN IMPERIAL FARMĀN BY THE ENGLISH 1710-1717

During the years 1710-1717, the attention of the English was directed to the procuring of an imperial farmān, and though some of their attempts failed because of the sudden death of the Emperor Bahādur Shāh and the war of succession that followed his death, in the long run they achieved greater success than they had expected. They also tried to come to a settlement with the provincial officers as a means of tiding over the immediate difficulties. The new officers posted to Bengal in 1710 were not unknown to the English. Murshid Qulī Khān, the former dīwān, and now reappointed, reached Bengal towards the end of 1710. But the most important appointment from the point of view of the English was that of Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān. This officer, a friend of the English, and one who had had a long correspondence with President Pitt of Madras,[1] was appointed not only faujdār of Hugli but also chief of all sea-ports on the Coromandel coast. Most important, he was made independent of the dīwān of the province.[2] He came to be a great help to the English in their relations with the imperial court of Delhi, but

---

1. The correspondence was relating to the procuring of a farmān by the English from the Emperor Bahādur Shāh. See Wilson II, II, p. IV.
2. Supra, p.65.

unfortunately for the English Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān was dismissed within a shorttime. For some time Khān Jahān Bahādur was appointed the deputy ṣūbahdār of Bengal, but on the accession of Farrukh Siyar, he was removed, giving the deputy ṣūbahdārī to Murshid Qulī Khān, who was also made the ṣūbahdār of Orissa and entitled Jafar Khān Nāṣirī. From the accession Farrukh Siyar (1713), therefore, it was to Murshid Qulī Khān alone that the English had to turn in all their dealings within the provinces.

Negotiations with Murshid Qulī Khān for a sanad

Even before the arrival of Murshid Qulī Khān in Bengal, the English had started negotiations with the imperial court at Delhi, through their friend Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān, the faujdār of Hugli. But at the same time they did not fail to note the influence exerted by Murshid Qulī Khān in the court. He was the "creature"[1] of Aẓīm al-Shān, the absentee ṣūbahdār of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and also the highest officer present in Bengal to look to the king's interests. The English therefore directed their attention to propitating the dīwān and to getting his sanad as soon as they heard of his reappointment.

Even before Murshid Qulī Khān had reached Bengal, the Council asked Mr. Lloyd, their agent at the Patna factory to meet the dīwān on his way down and to secure

1. Consultations, 12th March, 1712.

his sanad.[1] As soon as the dīwān reached Murshidabad (in December, 1710), the Council wrote to him a "complementing" letter informing that their agent in Qasimbazar factory would soon meet him.[2] Mr. Robert Hedges, the second in the Council, went to Qasimbazar in March of the next year (1711) and soon opened negotiations with the dīwān for his sanad. In July, Hedges wrote to the Council that the dīwān would not grant his sanad for less than Rs. 45,000 for the emperor and Rs. 15,000 for himself, but that he thought that with this sum he would be able to procure for the English an imperial farmān.[3] The Council authorised Mr. Hedges "to comply with the duan on those terms".[4] Simultaneously, the Council sent two of their members to Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān to ask him, "whether the prince's neshan [nishān] has yet come to hand or no; if it is not to desire him to let us know in what manner he will propose to assist us for that the duan has stopt all our business and now being high time for us to procure our investments we must be obliged to apply ourselves to the duan unless he can propose some way speedily to help us, that they are to urge him that he may not have any pretenoe to be angry for our applying ourselves to the duan."[5]

---

1. Consultations, 17th March, 1710.
2. Ibid., 21st December, 1710.
3. Ibid., 13th July, 1711.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān replied that he expected the prince's nishān daily but could not fix the date of its arrival. As for their business, Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān told them "concerning the investments it is advisable on no pretence to defer it for before the time of its coming it was probable the neshan would arrive which would hinder the duan from making any unreasonable demands".[1] Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān also positively forbade the English "to court the duan in our affairs".[2] A few days later the Council received another letter from Mr. Hedges saying that the dīwān "will come to no terms under Rs. 45,000 for the prince and Rs. 15,000 for the king under which sums he will by no means grant us his sunnud besides as they write us there will be some thousand of rupees as contingent charges to severall officers."[3] The Council "seriously considering the vastness of his demands which if paid him 'tis probable he may come on us for an after clap of a sum for himself which he has done on the Dutwh, who notwithstanding they have a phirmaund and a neshan yet has stopt their business demanding 33,000 rupees for himself", wrote to Mr. Hedges that if he could not persuade the dīwān to give them his sanad with promise of aid in obtaining a farmān for Rs. 33,000

---

1. Consultations, 18th July, 1711.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 30th July, 1711.

"of which we will oblige the merchants to pay one third", he was to tell the dīwān that "we have ordered them down and that we will, since he stops our master's affairs stop all Moor ships from passing by our fort, and that we acquaint the emperor that the present is now ready to be sent him we staying only for his passports as also to acquaint him how the duan impedes our affairs."[1] The Council actually wrote a letter to ʿAẓīm al-Shān in which among other things they complained against Murshid Qulī Khān.[2] A week later the Council wrote to Mr. Hedges at Qasimbazar telling him that "if the duan will not comply, we are resolved to turn our faces to fortune".[3] Another week later the Council recalled Mr. Hedges from Qasimbazar as they had already agreed to procure their whole investment for the next shipping through Fatehchānd (later Jagat Śeṭh) an "eminent merchant", he being responsible for all "bad debts at the aurungs and our goods to be delivered here in Calcutta."[4]

The Consultations refer to the stopping of their business by Murshid Qulī Khān. The Council also sent two of their factors to Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Khān to ask for his help.

---

1. Ibid.
2. See infra, p.249.
3. Consultations, 6th August, 1711.
4. Consultations, 13th August, 1711.

Basing himself on this, Wilson charges Murshid Qulī Khān with hostility and says that he "did his best to stop all their boats and business".[1] But it is not clear when and where the dīwān stopped the English boats and business. No complaint about any stopping of the petre-boats from Patna is on record. Other places where the business could have been stopped were Qasimbazar and Hugli. From Qasimbazar Hedges did not make any such complaint, while in Hugli Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān, the faujdār was a great friend of the English. It is not, however improbable that the dīwān authorised the officers to demand customs from the English because they had neither an imperial farmān nor the dīwān's sanad. The attempt of the Council to procure their goods through Fateḥchānd, who undertook to deliver the goods at Calcutta suggests that the Council adopted this policy to evade paying customs for which Fateḥchānd was to be responsible. The goods were contracted giving Fateḥchānd a margin of 6¼%.[2] That compared with the 3% customs that were or could be demanded by the Bengal government, but Fateḥchānd became responsible for all bad debts at the āṛangs (depots) and he also undertook to pay the charges of sending the goods to Calcutta. The most important consideration for the Council must have been that they evaded the payment of

---

1. Wilson, II, I, p. XXIII.
2. Consultations, 13th August, 1711.

customs which if once paid, would have created a bad precedent for them. The case, therefore, seems to be not one of an actual stoppage of the boats and business, rather of a demand for customs by the dīwān or his officers. Another point that deserves notice is the agreement between Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān and the English against the dīwān. While the English requested Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān not to be angry at their applying to the dīwān, Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān positively forbade them to court the dīwān in their affairs. It seems that the Council were at this time playing a double game. They were trying to procure the imperial farmān through both the officers, Murshid Qulī Khān and Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān, not knowing whose influence was greater in the imperial court. This attitude of the Council is clearly manifested by their revision of their own decision in the course of their negotiations with the dīwān. On 13th July, they agreed to pay Rs. 60,000 to the dīwān and ordered Hedges to comply with his demands, yet curiously enough, the same Council considered the same amount to be vast and oppressive only 17 days later, [illegible] saying that they apprehended that the dīwān "may come on us for an after clap" and cited the example of the Dutch. It ~~is~~ has not been possible to verify whether the Dutch suffered in the like manner, but as far as the relations of the English with Murshid Qulī Khān and the Consul-

tations of the English Council are concerned, there is nothing to confirm the validity of the Council's apprehension. The truth is revealed by the Consultation of 18th July which clearly says that Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān gave them hope that he had obtained for the English the prince's nishān which was daily expected and that he asked the English not to court the dīwān in their affairs. Another reason which probably influenced the Council to revise their decision was the news of Khān Jahān Bahādur's appointment as the deputy sūbahdār of Bengal.

After breaking off the negotiations with Murshid Qulī Khān, the English turned more earnestly to attempt the procuring of the prince's nishān. They also sent a present of Rs. 200 to Khān Jahān Bahādur, the deputy sūbahdār with a prayer that he would confirm their trade privileges.[1] But before they could obtain any such grant, they received disquieting news from Hugli. Their friend Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān had been dismissed from his posts. The Council therefore found no alternative but to turn again to Murshid Qulī Khān. In the meantime Murshid Qulī Khān had lowered his demand by Rs. 7,500. On 13th October (1711) the Council received a letter from Hedges at Qasimbazar informing that as they were preparing to leave Qasimbazar

---

1. Consultations, 27th August, 1711.

the dīwān had sent for them proposing that he would give his sanad on receipt of Rs. 30,000 and would procure for them an imperial farmān if they promised to pay Rs.22,500 on the receipt of the farmān.[1] The Council took it to be a God-sent opportunity and decided to "immediately write to Mr. Hedges etc at Cassimbazar to comply with him on the foregoing terms".[2] The Council may have decided to write immediately to Hedges, but it is difficult to be sure whether they wrote at all. In March of the next year (1712) Hedges is found again writing from Qasimbazar that the dīwān was still demanding Rs. 52,000 for the granting of his sanad and procuring the imperial farmān.[3] But by then, the Council no longer felt any need to continue the negotiations with the dīwān because only a week before they had received a parwānah from Khān Jahān Bahādur, the deputy sūbahdār confirming their privilege of trade in Bengal and Orissa without any price asked and the presents given him and his under-officers were goods worth only about Rs. 500.[4]

It may be noted here that the imperial officers in Bengal were not in agreement about what should be the relationship with the traders. While the dīwān was carrying on negotiations demanding a high sum from the English, the

---

1. Consultations, 13th October, 1711.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 6th March, 1712.
4. Ibid., 1st March, 1712.

deputy sūbahdār granted them his parwānah for no price at all. What could have been the attitude of the dīwān to the action of the deputy sūbahdār is a matter of conjecture, because soon the country fell into confusion again due to the Emperor Bahādur Shāh's death, - a confusion which compelled the dīwān to take security measures for the province as well as for himself.

Trade relations in Hugli

For about a year from Bahādur Shāh's death to the accession of Farrukh Siyar (1713), the country was faced with civil war. Though peace was maintained in Bengal, Murshid Qulī Khān was busy in internal matters[1] rather than in looking to the traders. The English for their part tried to procure a farmān from Jahāndār Shāh who occupied the throne for a short time. Soon after the accession of Farrukh Siyar, peace was established and he set about making administrative rearrangements. Murshid Qulī Khān became the highest imperial officer in Bengal and Orissa. He could therefore turn his attention to the trade and commerce of the country with new authority.

The position of the English in Bengal again became precarious. Their attempts to procure a farmān from

---

1. He was busy fighting against Farrukh Siyar, the competitor for the throne and Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān, the dismissed faujdār of Hugli. See Chapter II.

both Bahādur Shāh and Jahāndār Shāh had failed. Sarbuland Khān from whom they had obtained a parwānah at a high price was no longer in the Bengal service. Twice they had agreed to pay a high sum to Murshid Qulī Khān to obtain his sanad but on both occasions they had reversed their decision. Khān Jahān Bahādur from whom they obtained a parwānah was also removed. The English therefore reverted to their original position, i.e. faced with Murshid Qulī Khān, but a Murshid Qulī Khān who was now raised both in status and dignity.

Murshid Qulī Khān was no doubt aware of the position of the English and turned his attention towards them as soon as he had obtained the sūbahdārī of Orissa and deputy sūbahdārī of Bengal. One Consultation records, "the duan having sent to his deputy at Dacca to demand of the merchants there four years customs or else that they show him the duan's sunnud, agreed that we send up a vacqill there with the subah's perwana."[1] The demand of four years' customs suggests that Murshid Qulī Khān's calculation started from the date of his reappointment in Bengal in 1710. But the English were armed for these four years with two parwānahs, those of Sarbuland Khān and Khān Jahān Bahādur. If Sarbuland Khān's parwānah were

1. Consultations, 18th June, 1713.

considered invalid after his removal, Murshid Quli Khān could only have demanded two years' customs, those for 1710 and 1711, because before the shipping period of 1712 the English had obtained the parwānah of Khān Jahān Bahādur. But what actually happened at Dacca is not on record. The Consultations are silent; in fact one Consultation suggests that they did not even send the wakīl.[1] But the situation nearer home, at Hugli, proved to be more vexatious to the English. It was reported that Lahori Mall, the collector of customs under the dīwān at Hugli had stopped the English business, refusing to pass their dastaks.[2] Two Englishmen, Messrs Hedges and Williamson were sent to Hugli with sixty soldiers with instructions "to go to the public cutchery /faujdār's office/ to demand the reason why they stop our trade urging if they could show the king's orders to forbid the English trading, they would return to our factory and peaceably obey such orders, otherwise if they continue impeding us in our traffick that they give the dohie, which is charging them in the king's name not to molest us, which if they continue to do without orders from the king, we shall be obliged to stop all their shipping and hinder their trade as much as we can."[3] It is interesting to note

1. Consultations, 14th June, 1714.
2. Ibid., 18th June, 1713.
3. Ibid., 29th August, 1713.

the Council's argument in this Consultation. If the emperor did not grant them any farmān confirming their privileges, he did not at the same time forbid them to trade according to their former privileges. The novelty of the argument is praiseworthy; it shows the determination of the English to continue their trade by all means. But as a solution of the problem it was valueless, because the government officials might in the same tenor, put forward just the opposite argument. Be that as it may, the actual problem at Hugli was altogether different in nature. Messrs. Hedges and Williamson went to Hugli and visited Mīr Nāṣir, the deputy faujdār. The latter called all the customs-house officers before him and asked them in the presence of the English gentlemen the reason why they had stopped the English trade. They replied that "they were asked not to use force to stop our goods, but to give the king's dohie and take accounts of our goods, which was all they yet could do against our superior force".[1] This reply of the officers is significant. It means that they were asked to inspect the goods to see whether they constituted an abuse of dastak. It cannot be denied that the government had the right to carry out this inspection, which was, however, characterised by the English as the stopping of their trade. A week later, the Council records the satisfactory settlement of their affairs at Hugli.[2]

1. Ibid., 10th September, 1713. 2. Ibid., 17th September, 1713

There was a second report of stopping the English trade in Hugli towards the end of 1713. The Council at once decided to stop all Mughal ships up and down the river.[1] But soon after in January, 1714, they received the emperor's orders to Jafar Khān (Murshid Qulī Khān) under the vizier's seal asking him to permit the English to trade as formerly in Aurangzīb's reign.[2] In accordance with the imperial order, Murshid Qulī Khān also issued a parwānah to the English permitting their trade customs free as it was in the days of Aurangzīb.[3] What happened to their business that was reported to have been stopped earlier is not on record. It is also not known whether the English actually stopped the Mughal ships as decided upon in their earlier Consultation. However, what is known is that in February, 1714 they sent handsome presents to the faujdār and other officers in Hugli "for having been always friendly and obliging to us".[4]

Trade relations at Qasimbazar

For about a year after the receipt of the emperor's orders, there was no complaint of stopping the English trade. But in April, 1715, the Council received the news

1. Consultations, 18th November, 1713.
2. Ibid., 4th January, 1714. See also infra.
3. Ibid., 5th May, 1715.
4. Ibid., 1st February, 1714.

that their factors had had money extorted from them by the customs officers in Qasimbazar. The Consultation of the 28th April reads, "the duan conniving att the custome house officers at Cassimbazar or encouraging them to seize several of our merchants factors, who provided goods for us and extort money from them on pretence of custome."[1] The attempt of the Company's wakīl to bring the matter to the notice of Murshid Qulī Khān failed, because of the machinations of the officers. The Council therefore sent two of their councillors to Hugli to get their complaint recorded in the official news-report there, so that it might attract the notice of the dīwān. Messrs Browne and Spencer went to Hugli and recorded the complaint in the news-report.[2] A few months later, the Company resettled the Qasimbazar factory and sent Samuel Feak as chief there. Soon after reaching Qasimbazar, Feak visited Murshid Qulī Khān who received him civilly. The dīwān complained to Feak that "the English coloured other peoples' goods by the abuse of their passes."[3] As for the English complaint of extortion of money from their factors, the dīwān promised an inquiry into the matter and the repayment of the money extorted, if the grievances were found to be true.[4]

---

1. Consultations, 28th April, 1715.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 15th August, 1715.
4. Ibid.

Why the Council recorded the "connivance" and "encouragement" of the dīwān in extorting money from their merchants is difficult to understand. On the contrary, it may be pointed out that the dīwān's reply was extremely reasonable. What more could be expected from him than to inquire into the grievances and repay the money if they were found to be true? The promise of repaying the money certainly sugessts that he was innocent in the affair.

Negotiations for the free use of the mint

During this time Samuel Fraak, the chief of the Qasimbazar factory, tried to come to a settlement with Murshid Qulī Khān for the free use of the mint at Murshidabad. The intricate system of currency has been discussed already. To the English Company the system was a perpetual vexation. As long as Aurangzīb lived and had his court in the Deccan, the English in Bengal experienced no difficulty because the Madras rupees, which, with the permission of the emperor they coined in Fort St. George, were readily acceptable in Bengal. This was advantageous to the English in two ways. First, they could import Madras rupees according to their needs. Secondly, the importation of Madras rupees was profitable to them because 89½ ounces of dollar silver could be converted into 218 Madras rupees, paying 2% for the cost of coining and 100 Madras rupees would fetch in Bengal 109 current rupees (the ideal coin

current in Bengal) i.e. there was a 9% appreciation; or in other words 89½ ounces of dollar silver (or 218 Madras rupees) were equivalent to some 238 current rupees in Bengal.[1] But when at the accession of Bahādur Shāh the imperial court moved to the north, the Company found that their Madras rupees were no longer as much valued as before. In 1709 the Madras rupees depreciated in Bengal by 2%,[2] 89½ ounces of dollar silver (or 218 Madras rupees) became equivalent to some 233 current rupees. Two years later (1711), the Madras rupees depreciated by another 2%.[3] To recoup this loss, the English Council at Calcutta had two alternatives to follow. First, they could import bullion instead of Madras rupees and sell that in Bengal market in which case 89½ ounces dollar silver would ordinarily fetch them 209 sicca rupees or 235 current rupees. The second alternative was to coin money in the local mint, the same amount of silver producing 212 sicca rupees or some 238 current rupees. This latter advantage could be secured only if they could obtain permission from the government to coin money at the mint free of dues, for if instead they had to pay 3% for the use of the mint the advantage would be turned to a loss. The Council in

1. Wilson II, L, pp. LIII-LIV.
2. Consultations, 17th October, 1709.
3. Ibid., 9th August, 1711.

1709 decided to import bullion instead of Madras coins and wrote to the Fort St. George accordingly. They also expected to get permission to coin money in the Murshidabad mint, which was not however available in the long run. In any case from this time onward, the Council imported mainly bullion. But in course of time it was found that the sale price of bullion was always dictated by the bankers.[1] It was therefore found expedient to try to coin money at the local mint free of dues. When therefore Robert Hedges became president of the Council at Calcutta and Samuel Feak, the chief at Qasimbazar, it became one of their chief concerns to obtain permission from Murshid Qulī Khān for the free use of the mint.

In his very first meeting with Murshid Qulī Khān Feak asked permission for the free use of the mint. Murshid Qulī Khān seemed friendly and as the Council records, showed encouragement.[2] Feak at once began preparation to coin money. He asked the Calcutta Council to send him silver and two assistants to help him in coining the money. He also asked permission of the Council to purchase a house at Murshidabad near the mint to facilitate the minting work. The Council sent him two chests of treasure and two

---

1. c.f. Consultations, 9th August, 1711; 23rd February, 1713. See also supra, Chapter III.
2. Consultations, 15th August, 1715.

assistants but ordered him to hire a house instead of purchasing one.[1] A few months later, however, Feak received the final reply from Murshid Qulī Khān regarding the use of the mint. Feak wrote to the Council intimating Murshid Qulī Khān's reply, "it is not in his power to specifie the free use of the mint", but he promised to give a verbal order for the use of the mint till His Majesty's farmān came to confirm the same, and in case the farmān did not order it, he gave them to understand that they must then pay for the use of the mint.[2] Feak, however, did not give up the attempt to come to a settlement with Murshid Qulī Khān. In April, 1716, he wrote to the Council that he hoped to procure a sanad from Murshid Qulī Khān "to carry on business in Bengal unmolested and a verbal order for the use of the mint", on payment of Rs. 25,000 (Rs. 15,000 to Murshid Qulī Khān, Rs. 5,000 to Sayyid Akram Khān, and Rs. 5,000 to Raghunandan and other officers of the mint).[3] The Council ordered that "a letter be instantly wrote to Mr. Feak etc at Cassimbazar giving them leave to make up the business with the nabob and his officers as cheap and as speedily as they conveniently can, but that they must not far exceed the sum of 25,000 siccas mentioned in their letter."[4] In

1. Consultations, 10th November, 1715.
2. Ibid., 5th March, 1716.
3. Ibid., 16th April, 1716.
4. Ibid.

June Feak informed the Council that he had come to an agreement with Murshid Qulī Khān.[1] But though the Council decided to write the letter instantly, they did not probably send the money as speedily as the letter. In December (1716) Feak wrote to the Council that Murshid Qulī Khān had refused to allow the free use of the mint but demanded the agreed sum for allowing them free trade for the past two years. Feak also informed them that to realise money Murshid Qulī Khān had ordered Raghunandan to put peons on the merchants and to harass them.[2] The Calcutta Council records "Our boats with the Honourable Company's goods from Dacca and Maulda being stopped at Didergunge by Raggoonundum the farmer of the customes and finding no redress from the Duan Jafferoawne [probably by this time Jafar Khān had become sūbahdār] we were under the necessity of sending a party of soldiers, which we dispatched hence the 7th current to clear them by force."[3] The Council taking into consideration all these points wrote to Feak to pay Murshid Qulī Khān the agreed sum.[4] Whether the money was actually paid is not on record; the English certainly no longer cared for Murshid Qulī Khān's sanad, because in March of the next year (1717) the Council came to know that the emperor had granted them a farmān allowing

---

1. Consultations, 18th June, 1716.
2. Ibid., 10th December, 1716.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

all the privileges they had asked for.[1]

The relations between Murshid Qulī Khān and the English discussed above, show that three issues came to the forefront during this period, (a) the negotiations for a sanad from Murshid Qulī Khān and to obtain an imperial farmān through him, (b) the negotiations for the free use of the mint, and (c) the negotiations for free English trade in Bengal. The negotiations for a sanad came to a fruitless end mainly because the English were not prepared to pay the amount of money demanded by Murshid Qulī Khān. The negotiations to obtain permission for the free use of the mint also failed due to the intransigence of Murshid Qulī Khān. As for the English trade in Bengal the exact position is not clear. The Council record that their business was stopped a number of times in different places like Hugli, Qasimbazar and Diderganj. As for the cases of Hugli and Qasimbazar, it has been pointed out already that they were cases of either demanding customs or checking the abuse of dastaks. The Diderganj case seems to be of like nature because the Consultation clearly says that Raghunandan, the collector of customs, stopped the boats. The English had enjoyed both the privileges of custom-free trade and of issuing dastaks from a very long time. But after the death

---

1. Consultations, 28th March, 1717.

of Aurangzīb they could not procure any farmān confirming their privileges. Probably Murshid Qulī Khān took advantage of the situation and demanded customs from the English. Murshid Qulī Khān also complained to the English about the abuse of dastaks. The complaint does not seem to be unfounded. The nature of the abuse is not known from the native sources. The English records also do not specify the grounds of complaint. But one Consultation records that the Council agreed to give "liberty of our dusticks" to the natives for procuring rice.[1] The Court of Directors also in one of their letters urged upon the Council at Calcutta to take strict measures to see that the passes were not abused.[2] It was not improbable that Murshid Qulī Khān should have ordered the inspection of the English goods. But the English were not in the least prepared to give way to any of these demands of the government. The receipt of the imperial order in 1714 asking Murshid Qulī Khān to permit the English trade as before, and the receipt of Khān Jahān Bahādur's parwānah in 1712, did away with the dispute over customs, but the dispute over the dastak probably continued till the English embassy obtained Farrukh Siyar's farman in 1717. Though the dispute continued

---

1. Consultations, 24th July, 1712.
2. General letter from the court to Bengal, 18th January,1717.

their trade does not seem to have been adversely affected. A study of the trade position shows that it did not suffer neither in volume nor in extent.[1]

Receipt of the imperial farmān, 1717

Governor Pitt of the Madras Council was the first to conceive the idea of obtaining a farmān from Bahādur Shāh and he was also the first to make preparations to that end. He was on friendly terms with Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān, then the dīwān of Chinapatam and a nobleman of high birth, having influence in the court. Pitt prepared a sumptuous present to be delivered to the emperor when the latter came to the south in the course of his war with his brother Kām Bakhsh. But the emperor's hurried march to Delhi after the defeat of Kām Bakhsh prevented him from delivering the presents and soon after Pitt was dismissed.[2]

In 1710, when Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān came to Hugli, with his advice, the presents prepared by Pitt were transferred to Bengal. From this time onward, it became the supreme effort of the Calcutta Council to finish the project started by the governor of Madras. The English in Calcutta, as has been seen, negotiated with Murshid Qulī Khān to procure his sanad and obtain an imperial farmān through him. But side by side they also tried to make direct contact

1. See infra, p. 350
2. Consultations, 6th November, 1710.

with the court and in this affair their friend Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān helped them a great deal. Through him the English received a favourable letter from Farrukh Siyar and a sar-o-pā for the president of the Council. The president went to Hugli to receive the honour with due solemnity.[1] Soon after, Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān informed the Council that he had received a letter from 'Aẓīm al-Shān relating to the English affairs. The president, accompanied by a few members of the Council went to Hugli to know the contents of the letter. It was found that the letter was in reply to the one written by Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān before. The prince asked Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān to ascertain how much the English were prepared to pay for a farmān and how they wished it to be worded. The president replied that he could not give definite answer until he heard from the Councils of Surat and Madras.[2] Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān further told them that he had procured a nishān from the prince granting the English the privileges of trade which was daily expected to reach Hugli, but in the meantime he wanted to know how much they would offer for the nishān. The president replied that "when they had the perusall of it they should be better able to judge of its worth."[3]

---

1. Consultations, 6th November, 1710.
2. Ibid., 26th May, 1711.
3. Consultations, 26th May, 1711.

On 31st July 1711, the Council decided to write to the emperor, the prince and the vizier "that our present for the emperor is ready and will shortly be sent to court", and they asked Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān to write some letters of recommendation to his friends at the court to send with those of the English.[1] A copy of their letter to 'Aẓīm al-Shān is attached in the Consultation book which is as follows: -

"That sometime since by the means of Zoody Cawn advised that the whole piscash from Metchlepatam [Maslipatam] was arrived and should be forwarded by the advice of Zoody Cawn to the most High Court hoping through your great favour to obtain a phirmaund from the greatest of kings according to that granted by the blessed Aurungzeb, as also your neshawn confirming the same at the same time advising of the most inexpressible troubles given us by Mussud Cooley Cawn Duan to the mighty emperour in all our business and trade which not only Zoody Cawn advised but the whole country is witness of do now again in the most submissive manner send advise to your most High Court, that the time for sending away ships is now at hand for which reason humbly request that till [we] can be made so happy to lay at your feet the small and inconsiderable

---

1. Ibid., 31st July, 1711.

present hoping for the observing the highest mark of your benevolence in a phirmaund and neshawn, must request a husball omer [hasb al-amr] on the duan that [he] may not molest our traffick in any respect."[1] Towards the first part of 1712, when the Council were taking important decisions relating to sending the presents to the emperor, nominating the personnel of the embassy and getting copies of their previous documents ready,[2] they heard of the death of Bahādur Shāh and thus their preparations came to a stop.[3]

The death of the emperor was followed by a war of succession from which his eldest son Jahāndār Shāh emerged victorious and ascended the throne. But his success was short-lived, as he was soon opposed and over-powered by his nephew Farrukh Siyar, who in turn ascended the throne towards the beginning of 1713. The attempts of the English to send the embassy with presents to the emperor continued. As soon as they heard that Jahāndār was seated on the throne, they decided to write a letter to the king "writing the usual complements and as full as the Persian tongue affords" and one to Zulfiqār Khān, the vizier "to acquaint him that we have a present lyes ready

---

1. Attached to Consultations, 17th August, 1711.
2. Consultations, 26th February, 6th March, 1712.
3. Ibid., 12th, 13th March, 1712.

for to be sent to His Majesty, and that he would use his interest with the king for his husbulhookum and orders for the safe conveyance of it."[1] The letters were sent on the 15th September, 1712,[2] but they failed to bear any fruit, since the emperor himself was unseated within a short time. The news of Farrukh Siyar's success reached Calcutta on the 7th February, 1713.[3] The Council now decided to write to the new Emperor Farrukh Siyar.[4] On 28th February, 1713 Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān, the faujdār of Hugli (now dismissed) drafted the letters for the English.[5] It was decided in consultation with Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān that the letters should be sent to the emperor and four of his ministers, Sayyid ʿAbd Allāh Khān, Sayyid Ḥusain ʿAlī Khān, Rājā Chabela Rām and Afrāsiyāb Khān.[6] The wording of all the letters was the same, the addresses being different.[7] They were dispatched on the 16th March, 1713 through Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān. On an after thought a letter was addressed to Taqarrub Khān, probably because by this time they had heard that Rājā Chabela Rām was not a minister but the sūbahdār of

---

1. Ibid., 4th July, 1712.
2. The English translation of the copies of the letters are attached in the Consultation book, following Consultations, 7th July, 1712.
3. Ibid., 7th February, 1713.
4. Ibid., 23rd February, 1713.
5. Consultations, 28th February, 1713.
6. Ibid., 16th March, 1713.
7. Persian copy of the letter is attached to Consultations, 27th March, 1713.

Agra, while Taqarrub Khān was an important minister.[1] One letter was sent to ʿAbd al-Shakūr, Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Khān's wakīl at Delhi asking him to forward the letters to the respective addressees.[2] With the letters were sent 19 gold coins as nazrānah (present) to the emperor and 2 gold coins to each of the other addressees.[3] In the letters the Council desired a ḥasb al-ḥukm addressed to the ṣūbahdārs of the intervening provinces from Calcutta to Delhi, asking them to ensure the safe passage of their presents to Delhi and expected "on our presents arrival at Your Imperial Majesty's tribunall a husbulhookum by way of favour will be granted directing the subahships of Bengall, Behar and Orissa, to permit our business to go on as formerly." These letters produced the desired effect. Within the next few months, the Council received two imperial orders, the first received on 22nd October, 1713, under the seal of Taqarrub Khān and addressed to the ṣūbahdārs of all the provinces from Bengal to Delhi asking them to ensure the safe passage of the English embassy with their presents[4] and second received on 4th January, 1714 under the seal of Sayyid ʿAbd Allāh Khān, addressed to Murshid Qulī Khān "ordering him

---

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., Persian copy is attached in the Consultations.
3. Ibid., 28th February, 16th March, 1713.
4. Ibid., 22nd October, 1713.

to permit the English to trade as formerly in Aurangzib's time and not to molest them."[1]

The receipt of the imperial orders was the first step to a greater success that the English achieved in obtaining a farmān three years later. The Council at Calcutta realised its full significance. They made great rejoicings[2] after which they set to business, constituting the embassy, making necessary arrangements for them and giving them instructions.

Though all agreed to send the embassy, the members of the Council were divided on the constitution of the embassy. A minority of them held that the embassy should be headed by a senior servant, a member of the Council. Their main point was that a senior member was likely to be received more civilly by the emperor.[3] The majority of the members opposed this, probably rightly, on the plea that the senior or junior servant would make no difference to the emperor who would look upon even the greatest peer of any monarchy in Europe as lower in rank than himself. These majority members argued that the chief of the embassy should be selected looking to his capacity for business and for negotiating successfully in the court.[4] The Council also

---

1. Ibid., 4th January, 1714.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 5th January, 1714.
4. Ibid.

considered the question of appointing one well-versed in the Persian language to help the chief in his negotiations. They selected Khwājah Sarḥad, an Armenian Merchant and friendly to the English, for that duty. The Council first decided to send John Surman as chief, John Pratt as second, Edward Stephenson as third in the embassy, to be accompanied by Khwājah Sarḥad and Dr. Hamilton. On an afterthought they decided to nominate Khwājah Sarḥad as second and changed the order as follows: - John Surman, chief; Khwājah Sarḥad, second; John Pratt, third; Edward Stephenson, Secretary, and Dr. Hamilton to accompany as physician.[1] After some days John Pratt withdrew praying to be excused for his inability to accompany the mission. The Council therefore promoted Edward Stephenson to the third position, appointing Hugh Barker as Secretary.[2] The embassy, as it then stood, became final.

The embassy received elaborate instructions from the Council regarding their proceedings, the maintenance of accounts, consultations and diaries, and what is more important, regarding the concessions and privileges they were to ask for from the emperor. Each of the three Presidencies, Bengal, Madras and Surat sent their separate instructions. The general term, common in all instructions, was to ask for the confirmation of all their privileges,

1. Consultations, 27th January, 1714.
2. Ibid., 4th March, 1714.

hitherto enjoyed by the English in the whole Mughal empire. The particular points, embodied in the instructions from Bengal are quoted below:[1] -

"That you may know what to ask for, 'tis necessary you be well informed what our privileges are and on what terms we enjoy them.

"Instead off custom we pay a yearly peeshcash off three thousand sicca rupees into the king's treasury att Hugly, and we pay no other custom or duty on any goods or merchandize which we import or export, Nor on treasure coined for us at the king's mint which was att Rajamoll but is now removed to Muxodavad.

"Our goods or treasure which we send to our settlements of any of the Aurungs inland, pass on our own dustick without examination and back to us in the same manner.

"Our merchants factors or agents whom we employ at the aurungs or elsewhere are not to be molested or called to account by small officers upon ffrivolous pretences, whilst they continue in our service and are employed for us.

"If our factors or merchants endevour to defraud us the remedy is in our hands, we take them up and use such

---

1. Wilson, II, II, Appendix, pp. 276-78.

means as are proper and necessary to make them pay what they justly owe us.

"Convenient places and parcells of ground were grated us to build and settle factorys on, att, or near severall inland places off note as Hugly, Cassimbazar, Patna, Dacca, Maulda, Rajamoll, Ballasore, Radnagur etc which we still keep possession of & may settle factorys again att, after the king is pleased to confirm all to us in his Royall phirmaund (farmān).

"We hold and enjoy three towns namely - De /dihi/ Calcutta, Sootaloota (Sutanuti), & Govindpore (Govindpur), paying the same yearly rent for them into the king's treasury, which the Jemidars (zamīndārs) paid before they were granted to the English Company. The grant was made at Bordwan (Anno 1698) in a nishaun (nishān) from Sultan Mahmmud Azzeem (Muḥammad Aẓīmu-sh-Shān), ffather off his present Majesty king Furrukseer (Farrukh Siyar) whom God preserve, What we desire more for Bengall is that we may have the use of the king's mint custom ffree att Muxodavad (Maqsūdābād) and Dacca as we had itt att Rajamoll (Rajmaḥl), & the same free use of the mint att Patna also iff it may be obtained. We also desire our bounds round us att this place may be enlarged. The additions we desire will amount

to Eight thousand sicca rupees yearly rent and something more, which added to near thirteen hundred sicca rupees which we pay yearly rent for the three towns, will make about nine thousand four hundred sicca rupees per annum: which we desire we may be appointed to pay in one summ yearly into the kings treasury att some certain place, and that we may not be called upon for itt before the day of payment by any Suba Duan (dīwān-i-Ṣūbah) or Collector off revenues whatsoever.

"That you may perfectly understand what additions we desire may be made to our present bounds, and be well understood when you petition for them we herewith send you a list off the towns we now possess and off those we desire may be added to us,[1] with the rent paid them for the same by the Jemidars (zamīndārs) into the kings treasury, and we have hopes they will be granted to us, because we shall be punctuall in paying our rent on the day, and att the place appointed, which Jemidars (zamīndārs) are nott always.

"Itt would be a good advantage to the Companys affairs iff the king may be prevailed with to order that Rupees coined att Madrass may pass in payments off his revenues in Bengall."

---

1. The list is attached in Consultation book.

Some of the privileges demanded by the English need careful analysis. In the first place they demanded custom-free trade on payment of yearly pīshkash of Rs. 3,000 only. They had enjoyed this privilege since the time of Shāh Jahān on the grant of Shāh Shujā'. Secondly, they demanded the right to coin money in the local mint free of dues. The claim that they had enjoyed this privilege before does not seem to be correct. It has been shown in the foregoing pages that the Council were still negotiating with Murshid Qulī Khān to obtain this privilege. Thirdly, they demanded that their goods to and from the aurangs or inland settlements should pass on their own dastak "without examination." This privilege was originally granted to the English by Shāh Shujā'. But it has been pointed out in the foregoing pages that there were frequent occasions for friction between the Company and the government. Fourthly, the Council claimed that if the factors or merchants defraud the Company, the Company was free to take action against the English servants found guilty. But as for the native merchants, though the privilege was not given them by any previous grant, it had always been enjoyed by the Company through the goodwill and cooperation of the officers, particularly the faujdār of Hugli, as was

evidenced by the case of Nandarām.[1]

We shall not enter into the details of the proceeding of the embassy. Suffice it to say that although the initial attempts of the embassy to achieve their objects failed, in the long run, thanks to the skill of Dr. Hamilton who cured Farrukh Siyar of a serious disease, they achieved success. Separate farmāns were issued for each of the three Presidencies of Bengal, Madras and Surat. A number of hasb al-hukms were also issued under the seal of the grand vizier Sayyid ʿAbd Allāh Khān covering all the demands which the embassy had made. News of the success of the embassy reached Calcutta on the 28th March, 1717.[2] How far they were effective or how far they confirmed the former privileges or granted new ones to the English will be discussed in the next section.

---

1. Supra, p.218.
2. Consultations, 28th March, 1717.

Section IV

THE WORKING OF FARRUKH SIYAR's FARMĀN 1717-1727

The imperial decrees obtained by the Surman embassy embodying the privileges for the Bengal Presidency included one farmān and a few hasb al-hukms under the seal of the grand vizier Sayyid ʿAbd Allāh Khān. The important privileges granted by the farmān are quoted below:[1] -

(1) "That all the goods and necessaries which their factors of the subahship, ports and round about, bring or carry away either by land or water, know they are custom free, that they buy and sell at their pleasure, take the accustomary 3,000 rupees and demand no more on any account,

(2) "and if at any time or place their goods should be stolen, endeavour to find them out punishing the thief and returning them to their due owner,

(3) "& in their settling factories at any place, their goods and necessaries, buying and selling, let them be assisted according to justice.

(4) "That if any merchant or weaver or others become

---

1. A Persian copy of the farmān with English translation is available in Home Miscelleneous Series, Vol. 69, pp. 130-31. S. Bhattacharya has given a photostat copy of the same. (East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, Appendix.)

debtors, they pay their facors their due according to a just account, not suffering any one to hurt or injure the said factors,

(5) "and for the customs on wood etc that no one molest their boats or those hired by them.

(6) "That the copies under the chief qazi's seal be sufficient.

(7) "That the towns already bought do remain in their possession according to former custom,

(8) "& that the renting of the adjacent towns is granted, they being bought from the owners, & then permission given by the duan of subah.

(9) "If the silver coined at Madras be as good as that coined in the port of Surat, do not demand any discount,

(10) "and whomsoever of the Company's servants being debtors want to run away that they be seized and delivered to the chief of the factory.

(11) "For that which is forbid phowsdari etc do not molest them for it.

(12) "Take particular care of all wrecks and goods so lost by storm belonging to them."

The hasb al-hukms issued under the seal of Sayyid ʿAbd Allāh Khān cover all these privileges but they granted

some more privileges as quoted below:[1] -

(1. Concerning dastaks)

"It is commanded that a list be taken from under the seal of the chief of the factory and that according to it you give sunnud under your own seal, for which reason this husbulldookum is issued, that you do pursuant to great command (take a list) from under the seal of the chief of the factory and according to which you give sunnuds under your own seals."

(2. Concerning the mint)

"You do according to former custom settle the coining of the Company's gold and silver in the mint of Curreamabad [Murshidabad] and in the season when other merchants goods is coined, if it be not against the kings interest, let them have three days in the week."

(3. Concerning new factories)

"That you do pursuant to the great command let them in any place, settle new factories according to the custom of their other factories."

(4. Concerning the purchase of villages)

"It is commanded that the farming of the towns bought

---

1. Home Miscelleneous Series, Vol. 630, No. 1, 12, 14, 28 and 29.

formerly remain in their possession as heretofore, and that they have the liberty of farming the other towns petitioned for, if according to the former custom they buy them by the assent of the respective owners of them, then you are to give permission."

Farrukh Siyar's farmān is regarded as the Magna Carta of the English trade in Bengal.[1] C.R. Wilson observes that it was a real diplomatic success of the English.[2] That the English traders in Bengal thought so is revealed by their great rejoicings on the news of the receipt of the farmān. They had "a publick dinner for all the Companys servants and a loud noise with our cannon and conclude the day with bonfires and other demonstrations of joy which we know will be taken notice of in the wacka [news-report] and other publick newspapers."[3] The Council also arranged to receive the farmān with due respect and solemnity.[4] In view of the importance attached to the farmāns, it is necessary to examine them closely to see how far they confirmed the former privileges or awarded fresh privileges to the English in Bengal. The free trade of the English on payment of Rs. 3,000 per year was confirmed, but the

1. S.Bhattacharya: East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, p. 29.
2. Wilson II, I, p. XLVI.
3. Consultations, 13th May, 1717.
4. Ibid., 16th & 23rd November, 1717.

privilege was limited to imports and exports only. This provision therefore excludes the inland trade and also probably the private trade of the servants of the Company. To make the trade privilege effective, the provincial officers were enjoined (1) to accept the Madras rupees without discount, (2) to attempt to discover and punish any thief who stole the Company's property, (3) to assist the factors in their sales and purchases, (4) not to confiscate the ship-wrecked property of the Company, (5) to accept the copy of the grants under the qāḍī's seal without having required the Company's servants to submit them in original, (6) to see that if any merchant or weaver became debtors, they paid their due according to a just account, (7) and to hand over to the Company any of their servants who became debtors and deserted them. There is no support for S.Bhattacharya's view that "Freedom of the Company's servants from molestation, searches and oppressions, and the authority which the Company obtained over run-away debtors virtually conferred on them extra territorial privileges, and correspondingly affected the sovereignty of the Mughal rulers in Bengal."[1] Freedom of the Company's servants from "molestation" and "oppression" is scarcely even a privilege and does not constitute an

---

1. S.Bhattacharya: Op.cit., p. 29.

extra-territorial right. As for freedom from "search", nowhere in the farmān or hasb al-hukms does the word exist. Again, the Company's authority over "run-away debtors" applied to the Company's servants alone. Anyone reading between the lines of the farmān will agree that the farmān made a distinction between the "merchants, weavers and others "and the "Company's servants". In the case of the "merchants, weavers and others", the farmān provides that if they became debtors "they pay the factors their due according to a just account", while if the Company's servants became debtors, they were to be handed over to the Company. It is true that the farmān did not make any distinction between the Company's native and ~~the~~ English servants. But in the case of the native servants also the authority was given to the Company only if the native servants became debtors. This is also just a privilege, because in all other respects the native servants of the Company remained the king's subjects and accountable only to the king's officers. This privilege was given to the Company to enable them to recover the debts, and it seems too much to designate it as an extra-territorial right, except by an exercise of hind-sight.

Besides confirming the Company's former right of renting the three villages, Sutanuti, Govindpur and

Calcutta, the farmān permitted them to rent 38 more villages as prayed for by the embassy. The Company were to purchase the villages from the respective owners. But the words, "then permission given by the dīwān of the sūbah" made the privilege conditional upon the dīwān's approval. But the hasb al-hukm issued on this point, made the position clear, as it enjoined upon the provincial authorities that they give their permission if the Company purchased the villages from the owners.

Though the farmān is silent about the mint and dastak, the hasb al-hukms touched upon these two points. As for the mint, the hasb al-hukm ordered the provincial officers to allow the Company to coin money at Murshidabad mint for three days in the week, "according to former custom" and provided "it does not go against the king's interest". It does not specify whether the use of the mint was to be allowed free of dues, as demanded by the Company. The qualifying words seem to have left the final say in the hands of the provincial officers. If the "former custom" is taken into consideration, it must be remembered that the Company had not obtained any right to coin money in Bengal free of dues. The wording of the hasb al-hukm about dastaks shows that the position remained anomalous. "A list taken from under the seal of the chief of the

factory and that, according to it you give sunnuds under your own seal," made the Company's dastak ineffective unless it was supported by that of the provincial officers.

As soon as the Council received the imperial documents, they sent copies of them to Qasimbazar advising their chief there to show the documents to Murshid Qulī Khān and to get his sanad in conformity to the documents. On 20th July, 1717, Murshid Qulī Khān issued a parwānah ordering his deputy at Dacca to encourage the English trade and not to molest them.[1] But friction arose on other issues and the friction continued on this or that issue throughout the whole period till Murshid Qulī Khān's death. For the sake of convenience, the issues are divided into different heads and discussed separately.

Use of the mint and the purchasing of the 38 villages

As was natural, as soon as they heard about the receipt of the imperial orders, the Calcutta Council began preparation for their speedy execution. On 1st July, 1717, they sent twenty chests of treasure to Qasimbazar ordering the chief (Samuel Feak) there to "endeavour the coyning at Muxodavad mint".[2] On 30th July, Feak wrote from Qasimbazar

1. Consultations, 18th, 22nd July, 1717. For an English translation of the parwānah see Home Miscelleneous Series, Vol. 630.
2. Consultations, 1st July, 1717.

advising, "they had shown Jaffercaun [Jafar Khān] the copy of the king's royal phirmaund, and of the husbull-hookums about the mint and for the towns which after he had read, he positively said we shall not have the use of the mint nor liberty to purchase more townes."[1] The Council were not prepared for this blunt refusal. They were confounded. The Consultation reads, "we cannot immediately determine what course to take, that will be most likely to induce or oblige him to a complyance, nevertheless it is agreed that we immediately send express to Mr. Surman etc who we believe are on their way from court and direct them to give the vacqill they leave behind them notice of Jaffercaun's disobedience to the kings command, and order him to seek redress."[2] But their complaint to court did them no good, nor could Murshid Qulī Khān be induced to revise his decision. Murshid Qulī Khān's viewpoints on these two issues are not known. The Consultation of 19th August, 1717 reads that Samuel Feak sent "a long account of what discourse past between Jaffer Caune and Mr. Feak in a full assembly at the durbar." But the arguments and counter-arguments are not on record. The Company pressed for these two privileges throughout the period

1. Consultations, 30th July, 1717.
2. Ibid.

while Murshid Qulī Khān lived, but without any success. At one stage the Council offered to pay Rs. 40,000 to Murshid Qulī Khān to gain these and some other privileges, but the latter could not be induced to move from his original stand.[1] It seems that Murshid Qulī Khān realised the influence the English were daily gaining in Bengal. By their efficient administration of the Calcutta towns,[2] by their control over the river and the native shipping from the fort, the English had already assumed a position to be reckoned with. The addition of 38 more villages adjacent to their towns would give them an unrestrained opportunity to strengthen their position which Murshid Qulī Khān was not in the least prepared to concede. The same observation applies to the concession regarding the free use of the mint. It would give the English not only an undue advantage over all other traders, both native and foreign, but would be a serious drain upon the imperial revenues.

S.Bhattacharya is of the opinion that "the real opposition to the use of the mint came from Fatehchand, the foremost banker of Bengal, and the holder of the honour and title of Jagat Seth. He counteracted successfully all efforts of the English to win over the Nawab to the

---

1. Consultations, 22nd June, 1724.
2. Wilson II, I, pp. xxxv - xxxvi

execution of this important measure."[1] It is true that Fateḥchānd exercised great influence over Murshid Qulī Khān, but the latter's policy seems to have been guided solely by financial consideration. In the first place, although Fateḥchānd acquired the "sole use of the mint"[2] by 1721, he could not utilise it without paying the dues. On the other hand, the English demanded the use of the mint free of charge. The position becomes clear if we remember that the English were allowed to coin money at the Dacca mint on payment of the usual dues.[3] Secondly, Fateḥchānd became the government banker and received the title Jagat Seth only in 1723, six years after the English had obtained the farmān.[4] Thirdly, Murshid Qulī Khān did not even spare Fateḥchānd; a Consultation records that the nawāb fleeced Fateḥchānd to the tune of 5 lakh.[5] The conclusion therefore seems irresistible that Murshid Qulī Khān refused to concede these two privileges from both financial and political considerations. If he disregarded the imperial orders (in the case of the mint it does not seem that he really did), he did so in the interest of the Mughal government and it is here in these two points that

---

1. S.Bhattacharya: Op.cit., p.31.
2. Consultations, 28th August, 19th November, 1721.
3. Ibid., 12th August, 26th September, 10th October, 1723.
4. Supra, p.161.
5. Consultations, 24th June, 1722.

Murshid Qulī Khān's foresight is clearly manifested. That he was positively against further strengthening the English Company in Bengal is also evident from the cases discussed below.

Recovery of lost goods, building of a house in Hugli and a road in Calcutta

In May, 1718, the Council were informed that some people at Hugli had found some bales of goods adrift in a boat which were in turn seized by the faujdār of Hugli.[1] As the Company had lost some goods, the Council wrote to Richard Eyre and their wakīl at Hugli to examine the goods and recover them if they were found to be those lost by the Company.[2] The wakīl wrote back that on his inquiry, Mṛityunjaya, the chief collector of the king's revenues, had told him that he got "only one bale which contained ninety two pieces of cossaes /khāssa or fine muslin/ 40 cubits long and 3 cubits broad from which he sent one piece to the nabob who ordered him to sell them and to bring the produce to the king's account."[3] From the description of the goods the Council found that they belonged to the Company. They therefore wrote a letter to Murshid Qulī Khān, "with orders to Mr. Edward Page etc at Cassimbazar to

---

1. Consultations, 26th May, 1718.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

forward it and at the same time to request his order to the phowsdar at Hugly that the said bale may be delivered us as belonging to the Honourable Company."[1] Before they had received any reply from Murshid Qulī Khān, friction of a more serious nature had arisen over the building of the Company's house at Hugli. "Mr. Richard Eyre came down from Hugly and informs us that yesterday morning our vacqueel acquainted him that by order of the Nabob Jaffer Caun at Moxodavad the government designed to pull down the house we are building on the Company's ground where the old factory stood, forbidding us attempting any such work and before he could write a letter to advise us thereof the catwall [kotwāl] with his guard and a great mob entered the compound seized the workmen and their toolls, plundering the bannians house of the money lodged there to defray the charge of the building, and the factory of what they could carry away, the particulars he does not know being forced to fly down hither in the hurry and the bannians are not to be found but supposed to be taken prisoners."[2] The Council also received a copy of a news-letter from Hugli wherein were given the reasons for such violence. The news-letter reads as follows: "Formerly at Golgaut in Hugly Mr. Charnock Englishman had a factory in

---

1. Consultations, 26th May, 1718.
2. Ibid., 17th June, 1718.

the reign of King Aurunzeeb the aforesaid Englishman fought the phowsdar and Mogulls then plundered the whole city and then burnt it and so went away to his own country.[1] At this juncture the English of Calcutta have sent an Englishman to the aforesaid factory to build a new factory in form of a fort with brick walls and bullworks, the said Englishman is going forward with intent to finish it."[2] The Council at once decided to take the following actions: they decided to stop all country ships up and down the river from an octagon at Sutanuti,[3] to write to the emperor praying for justice and to write to Murshid Quli Khan acquainting him "with our intentions and the design this house is for".[4] In their letter to the nawāb, the Council gave the reason why they were building the house: "The former factory which the Company had at Hugly of ancient time being broken and fallen down and carried away by water, and now there being no place for the residence of any Englishman who sometimes happen to go thither for which reason we sent our people to build a small house in the Old Company's factory." Next the letter discussed the

---

1. It refers to the fight of Job Charnock with local authorities during 1686-87. For details see Wilson I, pp. 91 ff.
2. English translation is attached following Consultations, 17th June, 1718.
3. The octagon had been purchased at Rs. 400. See Consultations 14th November, 1717.
4. Ibid., 17th June, 1718.

oppressions of the Hugli officers towards the workers in the same words as was reported to the Council and quoted heretofore. The Council also voiced their suspicion that "surely some bad people has represented to you [the nawāb] in a quite different manner the building of this house." Lastly they urged the nawāb to order the faujdār not to molest the English in building the house, to recover their goods and necessaries and to release their servants and builders.[1]

Soon after, the Council received a letter from the faujdār of Hugli saying that they were stopped the building of their house at Hugli due to a misrepresentation in the news-letter that they were building a fort.[2] A few days later the Council received a letter from the nawāb saying, "we might build houses to carry on our business but not forts being contrary to the king's order, which was the occasion of his ordering our building at Hugly to be stopped, but if the phowsdar would assure him that it was only a house meaning no fortification, he would not molest it."[3] The Council were further informed that the bale of goods about which they had written before would be delivered to them.[4] Richard Eyre and their wakīl also wrote from

---

1. English translation of the letter is attached following Consultations, 26th June, 1718.
2. Consultations, 26th June, 1718.
3. Ibid., 1st July, 1718.
4. Ibid.

Hugli that "the waccanagur /wāqiʿā-nigār/ and catwall /kotwāl/ cashiered, the former for his false writings to the nabob and the latter for his insolent behaviour to our people who (as they say) had only orders to speak to our vacqill to forbear going on with the building but not to offer any violence."[1] A few days later, the Council received an assurance in writing from the faujdār of Hugli that "as soon as the boats we have stopt are released, they will write the nabob the waccanagur's representation of our building was villainously false for which he is already expelled his office."[2] On that very day the Council recalled their guards and released the country ships. But the English did not get permission to build their house at Hugli because their stoppage of the country ships before the receipt of the nawāb's reply enraged him (nawāb). A Qasimbazar letter dated 13th July, 1718 reads, "Nabob incensed at the English stopping the Moors boats has given strict orders to the phowsdar at Hugly and jemindars (where the English have any business) to molest their affairs and to warn all the country people from serving them and ordered 1,000 horse and 2,000 foot to oppose them."[3]

1. Consultations, 7th July, 1718.
2. Ibid., 12th July, 1718.
3. Bengal Inland Letters received, Letter from Qasimbazar dated 13th July, 1718, quoted in Wilson, III, p. 83.

Another letter from Qasimbazar says, "the vacqill had delivered our letter to the Nabob Jaffer Caune about the Hugly house and that he had read it but gave no answer."[1] The later Consultations further reveal that Murshid Qulī Khān withheld his permission to the English to build their house at Hugli to the last day of his life.[2]

In 1720, there arose a new cause of friction with the government on the question of building a road in Calcutta. The English version of the case is as follows: "The real ground of this complaint is nothing more than a handsome open road we were designing to make on the southermost part of our bounds, on a direct line so as to keep the country open and clear for levelling of which we were obliged to make a small ditch for the earth which they out of disgust or ill nature have termed an intrenchment though nothing more than what a horse may leap over, this being a generall benefitt for the free passage of the air through the whole town would have been made at the expence of our merchants ect inhabitants."[3] But the faujdār of Hugli informed Murshid Qulī Khān that "we were building outworks & casting up trenches round our towns."[4]

---

1. Consultations, 28th August, 1718.
2. Consultations, 13th March, 1727 record that the English did not yet obtain the permission to build the house at Hugli.
3. Consultations, 23rd June, 1720.
4. Ibid.

As a result, the English wakīl at Murshidabad was confined for one night. The government also ordered the English wakīl at Hugli "to write us to break up what allready levelled and fill up the ditch or otherwise they will send force to do it for us."[1] The Council stopped the road construction but decided to write to the nawāb explaining the matter. They also asked their wakīl at Hugli to go to the faujdār's court "and there publickly declare that we desire to live here as merchants and quietly enjoy the privileges granted us by his Majesty's Royall phirmaund but if they were resolved to affront & insult us we would not tamely bear it but defend ourselves and oppose any force they should send in an hostile manner to approach our bounds."[2] At the same time the Council made defensive preparation building "a couple of slight straw bungelaes [bungalow or out-house] on the southermost edge of our bounds for the conveniency of our soldiers and their arms during the rainy season, in case we should be obliged to keep out-guards to secure our inhabitants which will likewise show the government we are fixed in our defence."[3] Four days later, the Council received a letter from Qasimbazar advising "that Mahmud John [Muḥammad Jān] generall

---

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., 23rd June, 1720.
3. Ibid.

of the nabob's forces & his great favourite had sent to them to enquire the truth of this alarm .... on which they gave him a letter of the truth of this affair which he has carried to the nabob."[1] It seems that the English ultimately got permission to build the road, because in a Consultation of the next year it is recorded that John Eyre, the Company's zamindār in Calcutta, submitted accounts of the expenses incurred in building the road and the amount collected from the merchants to defray the expenses.[2] But the petty officers taking advantage of the Company's friction with the government tried to hinder the English trade at Qasimbazar and the Qasimbazar Council settled the affair with them offering them bribes and presents.[3]

Confinement of the English broker at Qasimbazar

In 1720, the Emperor Muḥammad Shāh emerged successful from his efforts to remove the Sayyid brothers. On this occasion, the nawāb demanded a present for the emperor from the traders. According to a Consultation he demanded Rs. 60,000 from the Dutch but did not mention any amount in the case of the English, but the nawāb's officers threatened that "the nabob would now oblige us to a complyance or else would stop all our trade in his subahship."[4]

---

1. Consultations, 27th June, 1720.
2. Ibid., 1st May, 1721.
3. Ibid., 11th July, 1st, 12th, 15th August, 1720.
4. Ibid., 13th March, 1721.

It seems that nothing was realised from the English on this score, nor was their trade stopped. But some time later, the English broker at Qasimbazar was imprisoned and carried to Murshidabad.[1] The Qasimbazar Council "sent a party to intercept them in the way, but that their people could not come up with them before they got to the nabob's camp, so that the party not being sufficient, returned without offering to rescue him."[2] The Calcutta Council taking this to be "an insult that must be attended with the worst of consequences should we tamely bear it" ordered the Wakīl to"declare that if our broker was not speedily released we should seek our own satisfaction." The Council also sent Captain Henry Dallibar with an Ensign, four Sergeants and fifty European soldiers to Qasimbazar as reinforcement.[3] Both the Calcutta and Qasimbazar Councils thought that the nawāb had confined their broker to realise the present from them for the emperor.[4] They therefore resolved to release the broker by force. But it was found later that the case was otherwise. The broker was confined for some misdemeaner on his part against the government. The case is explained

---

1. Ibid., 10th May, 1721.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 10th and 13th May, 1721.
4. Ibid.

in a Qasimbazar letter dated 30th May advising, "of the releasement of the broker in a handsome manner, the nabob giving him a seerpaw of a coat, sash and turban, which by everybody is esteemed as a very great favour, and they hope has put an end to severall complaints that they have for some time past been troubled with the nabob himself enquiring into severall articles alledged against Contoo [Kantu, the broker] and particularly the report of his wife's hanging herself, which not being proved he was acquitted in a very creditable manner, the nabob bidding him tell his masters, that though he was a servant to the English yet he was a subject and tenant of the kings, and as there were such reports he could not avoid examining into the truth of them, which he had thus long deferred, being very busy in dispatching the king's treasure, and that now he might go to the factory, and tell them to go on with their business as usuall!"[1]

Settlement of the Dacca and Malda factories

In 1723, the Council decided to settle factories at Dacca and Malda.[2] They were aware that they "must first have permission from the nabob to settle them", but

1. Consultations, 5th June, 1721.
2. Ibid., 19th January, 1723.

suspected that the nawāb's favour might not be easily obtained. The Council therefore decided to make a present to the nawāb to soften his heart to the affairs of the English. The present decided upon was a "fine imbost cloth tent, which if not disposed of, one way or other will be spoiled, no merchant will buy it, and to sell it in pieces, will oome to such a poor market, that considering its loss will appear very inconsiderable, we therfore think this a very proper present for the nabob."[1] Henry Frankland was appointed chief of the Qasimbazar factory with instructions to present the tent to the nawāb on his first meeting and to negotiate for his sanad. The tent might have been a fine one, but the nawāb was not to be soothed with the present. He demanded Rs. 40,000 to issue a parwānah permitting the English to settle the Dacca and Malda factories.[2] It was probably due to the nawāb's demand for money that the tent was not presented to him.[3] Instead Frankland agreed to pay a sum of Rs. 20,000 to the nawāb.[4] Some time later, the nawāb issued a parwānah permitting the English to settle the Dacca factory but he remained silent about the Malda one.[5] Frankland wrote to the Council

---

1. Consultations, 19th January, 1723.
2. Ibid., 21st March, 1723.
3. The tent was returned to Calcutta later. See Consultations, 30th January, 1724.
4. Ibid., 21st March, 1723.
5. Ibid., 27th May, 1723.

at Calcutta, asking their opinion whether he should pay the agreed sum to the nawāb, because the parwānah issued by him was "not in the usuall manner it being sealed up," so that its contents were not known.[1] The Council, considering that "Nabob Jaffer Caun is esteemed a person of honour, and he having on all occasions given us demonstrations of his friendship in transacting our Honorable Master's concerns" ordered Frankland to make the payment.[2] But Frankland wrote back saying that he had not paid the agreed sum to the nawāb because the affairs at Malda were not settled and that he would soon address the nawāb regarding the Hugli house and the free use of the mint.[3] While the situation was such, the faujdār of Hugli made a demand for Rs. 40,000 and the faujdār of Balasore demanded a handsome present for the emperor.[4] To these demands the Qasimbazar Council replied that "no money was to be expected till we were in possession of the mint."[5] In the meantime, serious friction had arisen between the Company and the government over the settling of Malda factory, as will be discussed presently. Being in despair of achieving any settlement with the nawāb without paying a high price, the

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., 27th May, 1723.
3. Ibid., 17th June, 1723
4. Ibid., 8th, 22nd July, 1723.
5. Ibid., 25th July, 1723.

Calcutta Council proposed to the faujdār of Hugli that they would pay Rs. 40,000 to the nawāb, provided they were allowed free use of the mint, to build their house at Hugli and to settle the Malda factory.[1] The nawāb, however, showed little encouragement and the proposal fell through.

While Frankland was still carrying on negotiations with the nawāb to procure his permission, the English settled both the Dacca and Malda factories. John Stackhouse had been appointed the chief at the Dacca factory. All preparations being complete, on 25th March, 1723, Stackhouse started for Dacca with money and goods and accompanied by 2 writers and 38 soldiers.[2] The English trade at Dacca continued without any hindrance throughout the period till the death of Murshid Qulī Khān. The deputy nawāb of Dacca received them "civilly" and permitted them to carry on trade without molestation.[3] The conditions seemed so normal that within a short time Stackhouse sent the soldiers who had accompanied him back to Calcutta.[4] After some initial difficulties, Stackhouse also obtained the privilege of coining money at the Dacca mint on payment of the usual customs.[5] Sometimes they had to face compe-

1. Consultations, 22nd June, 1724.
2. Ibid., 25th March, 1723.
3. Ibid., 20th May, 8th July, 29th October, 1723.
4. Ibid., 3rd June, 1723.
5. Ibid., 26th September, 10th October, 1723; 15th June, 1724.

tition with the government agents appointed for purchasing cloth for the emperor,[1] and at one stage, they apprehended molestation of their business by the government agent Śrīnāth,[2] but with the help and cooperation of the deputy nawab of Dacca, the situation never proved serious.[3]

Although the English trade at Dacca was free from any hindrance, the conditions at Malda were very different. The Calcutta Council had begun preparations to settle the Malda factory even before Frankland started negotiations with the nawāb for securing his permission. On 19th January, 1723, the Council sent Messrs Bonket and Russell with Rs. 20,000 to open their investment at Malda.[4] But from April of the same year, trouble started in the Malda factory. Bonket and Russell informed the Calcutta Council that they had been obstructed in their business by the people of Darpa Nārāyan, the zamīndār of that place.[5] The Qasimbazar Council sent a petition to the nawāb "to obtain restitution and prevent their being further impeded in their affairs."[6] A few days later the Calcutta Council received letters from Qasimbazar and Malda, "both advising us that the gentlemen at Maulda

---

1. Consultations, 1st November, 1723.
2. Ibid., 3rd August, 1724.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 19th January, 1723.
5. Ibid., 15th April, 1723.
6. Ibid., 2nd May, 1723.

/Malda/ are ill treated and intirely impeded from transacting our Honorable Masters affairs by the people belonging to Durpnaram /Darpa Nārāyan/ the Jemindar /zamīndār/ of that place, and that they have used all means possible to appease and accommodate matters with Durpnaram but cannot effect any with him on reasonable terms, & if they have liberty to remove to Mucdampore /Makhdumpur/ which is near adjacent to Maulda & out of Durpharam's liberty's, that they doubt not but to be able to transact our Honorable Masters affairs to their approbation."[1] The Council decided to write a petition to the nawāb acquainting him with the ill treatment of their factors by Darpa Nārāyan's people and at the same time they permitted Bonket and Russell to withdraw to Makhdumpur.[2] Accordingly Bonket and Russell removed to Makhdumpur[3] and wrote to Calcutta that they had not been molested since they left Malda.[4]

A few days later the nawāb sent some officers to survey the English factory at Makhdumpur. The officers were honoured by the English factors at Makhdumpur with a small present.[5] What report the officers submitted to the nawāb is not known, but during the following months, the factors from Makhdumpur reported serious impediment to

---

1. Consultations, 18th May, 1723.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 17th June, 1723.
4. Ibid., 24th June, 1723.
5. Ibid., 5th, 12th August, 1723.

their business by the government and Darpa Nārāyan's people. The Qasimbazar Council wrote to Calcutta that "they were advised by Mugdampore [Makhdumpur] that Durpnaram had forbid all the merchants trading with them, and the severity used with them to prevent their selling goods had put a stop to their affairs, whereupon they had endeavoured to acquaint the nabob with these unjust proceedings, & that they would not be passed without due resentment; notwithstanding which Durpnaram's gomastah vindicated what had been done; that Futtichund [Fateḥchānd or Jagat Seṭh] had refused to interpose or endeavour an accomodation, so that they had again sent the vacqill with a remonstrance to the nabob against these proceedings."[1] Simultaneously, the Calcutta Council received a letter from Makhdumpur "advising that the phowsdar had ordered them to leave the place, that peons were sett on all their work people & by the nabob's order the phowsdar had caused the jemidars thereabout to hinder them from doing any business."[2] Upon consideration of these letters, the Calcutta Council took some important decisions. They asked Frankland, chief of the Qasimbazar factory "to endeavour to accommodate this difference either with Durpnaram or the nabob." Secondly, they sent a few soldiers to Makhdumpur to meet the emergency. Thirdly, they

1. Consultations, 26th August, 1723.
2. Ibid.

asked their wakīl at Hugli "to make the public protestations against this injustice done us, affirming that unless we have redress we shall be obliged to stop their shipping, boats and their trade of Bengal in our own defence and that more perswasive arguments be used."[1] A week later, the Calcutta Council took further action. They sent Ensign Searle with Sergeants, Corporalls and 30 soldiers to Makhdumpur to reinforce the soldiers already sent. They also wrote a letter "to Futtichund (the nabob's chief favourite) to represent these dishonorable and illegal practices which if he does not prevail to have speedily remedied, will be attended with the highest resentment."[2] A few days later they sent further reinforcements to Makhdumpur.[3] But in spite of these actions of the Council, more disquieting news came from Makhdumpur saying that the faujdār of Rajmahal was proceeding against them with great force.[4] A Qasimbazar letter advised that "they have tryed all methods to get the affairs of Mugdumpoor represented to the nabob by Futtichund and the phowsdar of Muxodavad but as yet without producing any good effect for which reason they conjecture he has writ to court and shall not be able to get any reply from him till he received order from the

---

1. Consultations, 26th August, 1723.
2. Ibid., 2nd September, 1723.
3. Ibid., 26th September, 1723.
4. Ibid., 10th, 17th October, 1723.

emperour for the same."[1] A week later the Calcutta Council were informed from Qasimbazar that they had tried to accommodate matters with the nawāb but failed, the nawāb insisting that they should leave Makhdumpur and return to Malda.[2] Taking these letters into consideration, the Calcutta Council asked Frankland to pacify the nawāb as best possible and ordered Bonket to leave Makhdumpur and return to Malda and Russell to endeavour to continue at Makhdumpur.[3] During the following few months the situation further deteriorated. The gentlemen from Makhdumpur reported not only the impediment of their trade but an armed clash with the government force, in which the government force was repulsed several times.[4] At this juncture, the Calcutta Council decided to stop all Mughal shipping up and down the river Hugli, "which method will be a terror to the Rajahmal [Rajmahal] officers and cause the merchants to intercede with the nabob for an accommodation."[5] The same day the Qasimbazar Council wrote to the English Council at Patna to complain to the imperial court against the hindrance of their trade at Makhdumpur.[6] But the result was just the reverse of that intended. On 5th December (1723) the Calcutta Council records that the force under

1. Consultations, 22nd October, 1723.
2. Ibid., 4th November, 1723.
3. Ibid., 4th November, 1723.
4. Ibid., 1st, 21st, 25th, 28th November, 2nd December, 1723.
5. Ibid., 28th November, 1723.
6. Ibid., 2nd December, 1723.

the faujdār of Rajmahal was increasing so that the English soldiers at Makhdumpur were surrounded.[1] The Qasimbazar Council sent their wakīl to the nawāb asking him to give duhie and to ask leave for Frankland to visit the nawāb.[2] In the meantime, the faujdār of Hugli sent one Khwājah Fāḍil Muḥammad, a merchant of Hugli, to the Calcutta Council to say that if they withdrew the blockade their privileges would be assured. Accordingly, the English withdrew the blockade from ships but not from boats which they resolved to stop till the difference was settled.[3] A few days later, news was received from Qasimbazar saying that the faujdār of Rajmahal was proceeding against Makhdumpur with a strong force of horse and matchlockmen and that the wakīl they sent to the nawāb "could get not other answer from the nabob than for us to leave Maulda and Mugdampoor."[4] Stackhouse also reported from Dacca that their nawāb (the deputy nawāb of Dacca) was sending a force in aid of Jafar Khān.[5] Another letter from Qasimbazar reported that the nawāb persisted in demanding that they should recall the gentlemen from Makhdumpur or Malda and that the faujdār of Rajmahal had crossed the river with 300 horse and 600 matchlockmen.[6] At this pro-

1. Consultations, 5th December, 1723.
2. Ibid., 5th, 12th December, 1723.
3. Ibid., 12th December, 1723.
4. Ibid., 19th December, 1723.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 23rd December, 1723.

spect of a general war with the government, the Calcutta Council decided to give way. They ordered Bonket and Russell to leave Makhdumpur but asked them to endeavour to settle at Malda.[1] The result was just what might have been expected. Four days later, a letter from Qasimbazar reported that the nawāb had permitted Bonket and Russell to return to Malda and had ordered the faujdār of Rajmahal "not to molest our broker in getting in what goods remaining or carrying on the Honorable Company's affairs at Mugdampoor."[2] The same day a report reached Calcutta that Bonket and Russell had reached Malda.[3] Thereafter, Frankland renewed his application to the nawāb for permission to settle the Malda factory,[4] but the nawāb demanded Rs. 20,000 before issuing his parwānah.[5] It seems that the English were not prepared to pay this amount, because no further information is recorded in the Consultation book regarding the Malda factory as long as Murshid Qulī Khān lived.

It is difficult to explain Murshid Qulī Khān's attitude to the English settlement of Malda or Makhdumpur factory. Why he issued a parwānah to settle the Dacca factory but withheld one in the case of Malda or

1. Consultations, 9th January, 1724.
2. Ibid., 13th January, 1724.
3. Ibid., 13th January, 1724.
4. Ibid., 30th January, 1724.
5. Ibid., 29th June, 1724.

Makhdumpur is not clear from the records at our disposal. However, it appears from the Consultations that the nawāb originally demanded Rs. 40,000 from the English for issuing his parwānah for the Dacca and Malda factories, Rs. 20,000 for each. Frankland reported later that he had agreed to pay Rs. 20,000 to the nawāb but when the nawāb issued his parwānah, it was only for Dacca and not for the Malda factory. When, after the friction was over, Frankland applied to the nawāb for permission to settle the Malda factory, the nawāb demanded the same Rs. 20,000, which he had originally demanded. It appears therefore that there was some confusion in Frankland's report that he had agreed to pay the nawāb Rs. 20,000. What was the agreement? Was it to pay Rs. 20,000 for procuring the nawāb's parwānah for one factory or both the factories? If the agreement covered both factories, why did not the nawāb issue his parwānah for both? As mentioned above, these points are not clear from the records, though there is no doubt that either Frankland misrepresented the facts to the Calcutta Council, thus jeopardising the English interests or the nawāb was guilty of witholding his parwānah for the Malda factory contrary to his agreement with Frankland. While Frankland asked the opinion of the Calcutta Council whether to pay the agreed sum to the nawāb he argued that the

parwānah was"not in the usuall manner it being sealed up" but did not say anything about the parwānah for the Malda factory, though by then he had known that the nawāb had not issued any parwānah for the Malda factory. Does it indicate that Frankland had agreed to pay Rs. 20,000 to the nawāb for a parwānah for the Dacca factory alone? Secondly, did Frankland pay Rs. 20,000 to the nawāb? It is clearly stated in the Consultations that till June, 1723, Frankland had not paid the agreed sum in spite of the positive order of the Calcutta Council to do so. Whether the money was paid afterwards is not on record, though it is most probable that the money was paid, otherwise the nawāb would have hindered the English trade at Dacca as well. But Frankland's hesitation to pay the agreed sum, after the parwānah had been received, on the pretext of obtaining the privilege of using the mint or building the house at Hugli might have prejudiced the nawāb against the English. The question of presenting the tent to the nawāb is interesting. The Calcutta Council positively ordered Frankland to present the tent when he visited the nawāb. But instead of presenting it, Frankland returned the tent to Calcutta. It is probable that the nawāb's demand for money decided him not to present the tent, but Frankland certainly acted badly. Though, with the materials at our disposal, the responsibility for

friction between the government and the English cannot be fixed exclusively on either the nawāb or Frankland, there are probably grounds for suggesting that Frankland was not the right choice to conduct negotiations with Murshid Qulī Khān.

The abuse of the dastaks and the demand on the Calcutta towns

The last cause of friction between the English and the government during the life-time of Murshid Qulī Khān was over the question of abuse of the dastaks and the demand by the sūbahdār on the Calcutta towns. The farmān of 1717 granted the English the right of issuing dastaks and confirmed their right of renting the Calcutta towns. The abuse of dastaks by the English had several times been questioned by the government but the question had never proved serious thanks to the vigilance of the Calcutta Council and the strict orders from the Court of Directors in England to stop all abuses of dastaks so as to remove all causes of complaint by the government. The English right of renting the Calcutta towns had never been questioned after they obtained the privilege in 1698. But both these questions came to the forefront in 1726 and it seems that the government under Murshid Qulī Khān tried to make a good bargain out of them.

The farmān granted the English the privilege of customs-free trade on goods "brought into the country or carried out" by land or by sea. The privilege was not extended to the inland trade. The hasb al-hukm granted the English the right to issue dastaks but the dastaks were made liable to ratification by the provincial officers. Necessarily therefore, the goods covered by dastaks were made liable to inspection by the custom officers. But the English were not in the least prepared to allow the officers to inspect the goods. A complaint usually made by the government was that the native merchants, appointed agents by the Company, carried their own goods under cover of the English dastaks, and that these merchants also dealt in goods not meant for export or import. These are the points that caused friction between the government and the English.

In May, 1726, the Calcutta Council received complaints from the faujdārs of both Hugli and Murshidabad about the abuse of dastaks. The Council made some rules to stop the abuse. It was ordered that all goods for which dādnī[1] was given should be brought to the warehouse at Calcutta where they should be examined by the warehousekeeper who was also made responsible for keeping a

1. "An advance made to a craftsman, a weaver or the like, by one who trades in the goods produced." Hobson-Jobson, p. 290.

correct account of such goods. The goods so deposited in the warehouse were not to be taken out without authority of the Council.[1] A few months later, a serious matter was reported to Calcutta by the Qasimbazar Council. It was reported that ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, manager of the nawāb's jāgīr had demanded Rs. 44,000 from the English and the Dutch. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm had also set peons on their merchants' houses to obstruct their business, but on complaint to the nawāb, the peons were withdrawn, but no satisfactory action was taken for his unjust behaviour.[2] Next month, the same ʿAbd al-Raḥīm again demanded Rs. 44,000, and on a refusal from the English, he confined the English wakīl at Qasimbazar. The Qasimbazar Council tried to bring the matter to the notice of the nawāb, but no officer in the darbār dared speak to the nawāb on their behalf, because the matter related to the nawāb's own jāgīr.[3] After some days, the broker was sent to the nawāb. On being questioned by the nawāb, ʿAbd al-Raḥīm explained that the English owed Rs. 44,000 due for the Calcutta towns.[4] The wakīl remained confined for a few months more and was inhumanly tortured by ʿAbd al-Raḥīm.[5] The Calcutta Council at last decided to stop the Moors' ships up and down the river Hugli.[6] At

1. Consultations, 23rd May, 1726.
2. Ibid., 25th October, 1726.
3. Ibid., 28th November, 1726.
4. Ibid., 12th December, 1726.
5. Ibid., 27th February, 1727.
6. Ibid., 13th February, 1727.

this the shipowners complained to the nawāb against the English.[1] At length, Fateḥchānd (Jagat Śeṭh) interferred and offered to accommodate matters with the nawāb if the English agreed to pay a suitable present to the nawāb, and he proposed Rs. 30,000 for the purpose.[2] The Council agreed to pay 15/20 thousand rupees provided the nawāb permitted them to settle the Malda factory and to build their houses at Dacca and Hugli.[3] The next day, the wakīl was released and Fateḥchānd explained to the English that the nawāb had got angry with them because the English dealt in rice and grain contrary to the imperial farmān, and that their servants indulged in private trade.[4] A Qasim-bazar letter informed the Calcutta Council that there was talk in Murshidabad that two hundred thousand maunds of rice had been sent down to Calcutta and that the Company's servants had sold them on their own account.[5] On 15th May, 1727, the English paid Rs. 20,000 to the nawāb and got his parwānah.[6]

It appears that the complaint of the government regarding the abuse of dastaks was genuine. Though the Company did not export rice and grain, it has been mentioned

1. Consultations, 27th February, 1727.
2. Ibid., 13th March, 1727.
3. Ibid. It shows that the English were not allowed to build their house at Dacca as well, but no friction about the Dacca house is reported in the Consultations.
4. Ibid., 20th March, 1727.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 15th May, 1727.

earlier that at least on one occasion they allowed their dastaks to be used by native merchants for bringing grain to Calcutta.[1] The Company's gain out of the duties realised from grain and rice sold in the Calcutta market increased gradually, so that the grain duties at 3¾%[2] sometimes amounted to more than Rs. 400 per month.[3] Secondly, though the Calcutta Council took action from time to time to stop the abuse of dastaks by native merchants, the private trade of the English factors continued unhindered.[4] It is certain that the English privilege of customs-free trade was not meant to cover the private trade of the Company's servants. But the government demand on the Calcutta towns is difficult to explain. The basis for the demand for Rs. 44,000 is not clear. The Company regularly paid their revenues for the Calcutta towns.[5] So the demand cannot be regarded as anything but sheer extortion.

During this period the Company's business expanded enormously. No stoppages of their boats or business are on record. The friction between the Company and the government was not due to any stoppage of trade, but arose over such extra privileges as the use of the mint at Murshidabad, the right to rent 38 more villages, the

1. Supra, 246.
2. Consultations, 4th September, 1716.
3. C.f. Consultations, 14th May, 1713.
4. C.f. Ibid., 25th January, 1721. See also Chapter V.
5. Allpayments of the revenues are recorded in the Consultations.

building of a house at Hugli and a road at Calcutta, the abuse of dastaks or the demand on account of the Calcutta towns and the settling of Malda factory.

Murshid Qulī Khān's attitude to the farmān of 1717 is clearly manifested in his relations with the English. Though he allowed the English to carry on their trade free of customs, he was positively opposed to the strengthening of the English position in Bengal. Thus he denied them the privilege of the free use of the mint and the purchasing of more villages round about Calcutta. He also prevented the English from building their house at Hugli on the plea that they were fortifying their station. In adopting this policy, Murshid Qulī Khān's position was strengthened by the death of Farrukh Siyar and the accession of Muḥammad Shāh. The government at once interpreted and rightly that after the accession of a new emperor, Farrukh Siyar's farmān had become null and void. A Consultation reads: "The officers of the present government being sensible that we want a confirmation of our immunities and privileges granted by Furrukseers phirmaund & husboolhookums make use of that as a reason to impede and molest our affairs at the subordinate factories especially at Pattna where some of them have not scrupled to dispute the validity of our grants, saying

the present king look upon Furrukseer as an usurper and had ordered his name to be struck out of the great seal and his own fathers Jehawn Shaw [Jahān Shāh] to be put in its place which being very true ....."[1]

During this period, the Company's servants in Bengal failed to make a correct appraisal of the situation. Out of exuberance of joy, on the receipt of the imperial farmān, they took recourse to force rather than tactfully handling the problem in their relation with the government. A little more patience would have brought for them the nawāb's permission for building the house at Hugli, and a more tactful negotiation would have given them the right to settle the Malda factory. The way the English sent soldiers to release their broker Kantu seems ridiculous. It demonstrates that they worked without carefully investigating the real issue. They failed to note that Murshid Qulī Khān was not to be intimidated by force or threats.

---

1. Consultations, 13th December, 1725.

Section V

OTHER EUROPEAN COMPANIES

Apart from the English East India Company, four other European companies settled factories and carried on trade in Bengal during the time of Murshid Qulī Khān. They were the Dutch, the French, the Danes and the Ostenders. The Portuguese, who were the first European traders to have their trade relations with Bengal, had already declined and had lost their hold on the commerce of Bengal. The Portuguese settlers were still to be found, their big settlement having been Hugli and nearby places. But they had no organised factories to carry on trade. The Portuguese of Bengal during this period were mostly the children of the soil and lacked the vigour with which their ancestors had challenged the mighty Mughal Emperor Shāh Jahān. During the early 18th century, the Portuguese earned their living by accepting employment under both the Mughal government[1] and the European companies. The English engaged them from time to time as soldiers and matchlockmen. The usual salary paid to them was Rs. 5/- per month as against Rs. 10/- paid to the other European soldiers.[2]

---

1. Orme MS. India, Vol IX, pp. 2164-65.
2. Cf. Consultations, 25th February, 1723.

The Dutch

The Dutch Company occupied a prominent place in Bengal by their extensive trade. During the early 18th century they were strong rivals of the English. There are occasional references to the Dutch trade in the Consultations of the English Council in Calcutta. On some occasions the English decided to purchase goods at a high price and thus forestall the Dutch traders.[1] Since the establishment of the Dutch United Company in 1602, they had been carrying on trade with the Indies. In India they had settled their factories at Surat and on the Coromandel coast. In 1627, the governor of Coromandel sent a band of traders to Bengal who established a factory at Pipli and thus was begun the Dutch trade in Bengal.[2] Soon after they abandoned Pipli and shifted to Balasore, but the Dutch trade in Bengal received a great impetus from the time they established a factory at Chinsura in 1653. By the end of the 17th century, the Dutch had their factories at Qasimbazar, Patna, Dacca, Malda, Balasore and Chinsura. During the rebellion of Subhā Singh and Raḥīm Khān, the Dutch along with the English and the French obtained permission from Ṣūbahdār Ibrāhīm Khān to defend themselves. Thus was laid the foundation in Chinsura of Fort Gustavus.[3]

---

1. C.f. Consultations, 17th March, 1704.
2. Cambridge History of India, Vol. V, p. 40.
3. Wilson I, p. 147.

In the year 1700 when Murshid Qulī Khān took over as dīwān of Bengal, the Dutch had already established their trade on a solid foundation. On the strength of a farmān of Aurangzīb, issued in the 5th year of his reign, the Dutch had obtained the privilege of trade in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa on payment of 3½% customs payable only once in any port of those provinces.[1] It is not known whether Aurangzīb issued any other farmān to the Dutch in Bengal. Many parwānahs issued later by the provincial officers of Aurangzīb's reign refer to this farmān on the basis of which they confirmed the Dutch privileges.[2] A farmān issued in the second year of the reign of Bahādur Shāh (probably to the Dutch at Surat) also refers to this farmān of Aurangzīb.[3] Besides fixing the customs, Aurangzīb's farmān also ordered the provincial officers to allow liberty to the Dutch traders in their sales and purchases, to allow them to appoint any willing native as their broker and to assist them in recovering any debts owed to them by the native businessmen. All the parwānahs received by the Dutch from the provincial officers embodied the main principles of this farmān. On Murshid Qulī Khān's appointment in Bengal, therefore, he found

1. British Museum Add. Ms. No. 29095, p.1.
2. Copies of such parwānahs are available in the British Museum, Add. Ms. No. 29095 and Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlando-Indicum, Vol. III, edited by J.E. Heeres.
3. British Museum Add. Ms. No. 29095, pp. 41-42.

the Dutch enjoying the privilege of trade on payment of 3½% customs. As has been seen, Murshid Qulī Khān's attitude to the traders was friendly and so he looked on the Dutch trade with sympathy. It is not known what action Murshid Qulī Khān took against the Dutch in course of executing the emperor's farmān of 1701 ordering the provincial officers to seize the Europeans and their effects.[1] On an analogy with the position of the English, it may be inferred, however, that Murshid Qulī Khān must have acted vigorously in executing the farmān. But soon after the withdrawal of the embargo upon trade by the emperor, Murshid Qulī Khān must have allowed the Dutch the trade privileges as before. That this is no mere surmise is borne out by the fact that Murshid Qulī Khān issued a parwānah to the Dutch in 1704.[2] At about the same time when the English started their negotiations with Murshid Qulī Khān to obtain a sanad, the Dutch also sent their wakīl, Rājballabh to the dīwān to negotiate on their behalf. The position of the Dutch was simple compared to that of the English. The latter faced a great problem arising out of the union of the two Companies. While the negotiations of the English with Murshid Qulī Khān continued for

---

1. See supra, p.168.
2. British Museum Add. Ms. No. 29095, pp. 64-67; F.W. Stapel: Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlando Indicum, Vol.IV, p.226.

years and ultimately proved abortive, the Dutch obtained a parwānah confirming their former privileges. It is difficult to say how much the Dutch paid to Murshid Qulī Khān to obtain this parwānah. Wilson states that the Dutch paid Rs. 30,000 to the dīwān as a price of this parwānah and cites the Consultation dated 27th October, 1704 as his reference.[1] The Consultation under reference does not bear him out; it records that Murshid Qulī Khān had demanded Rs. 30,000 from the English but does not refer to the sum paid by the Dutch. Another Consultation dated 29th September, 1704 reads that "the Dutch satisfied the duan", but does not specify the amount of money. A letter of the English wakīl Rājārām to the Council quoting Murshid Qulī Khān says that Murshid Qulī Khān had decided to collect R. 60,000 from the traders, Rs. 30,000 from the two English Companies and Rs. 15,000 each from the Dutch and the French.[2]

During the absence of Murshid Qulī Khān from Bengal in 1708 and 1709, the Dutch obtained a few parwānahs from the Bengal officers. Soon after the appointment of Ḍiyā' Allāh Khān as the dīwān of Bengal, Mīr Ḥasan, his deputy, issued a dastak granting the Dutch the privilege of trade as before. The revenue officers were ordered in

---

1. Wilson, I, p. 170.
2. Consultations, 18th October, 1705.

this dastak to refrain from molesting the Dutch trade, and not to realise from the Dutch any impost except the duty of 3½% in the port of Hugli.[1] In fulfilment of this order another dastak was issued by Mīr Nāṣir, the faujdār of Murshidabad granting the Dutch the same privilege under his jurisdiction.[2] But as soon as Ḍiyā' Allāh Khān, the dīwān, reached Rajmahal, he recalled the dastak issued in his absence by his deputy, and demanded that the Dutch approach him for their privileges.[3] The Dutch realised and rightly, that the dīwān had utilised this pretext only to extort money from them.[4] Soon after, the Dutch obtained a parwānah from the deputy of Prince ʿAẓīm al-Shān in Bihar (probably Sayyid Ḥusain ʿAlī Khān, the deputy ṣūbahdār) granting them the trade privileges in Bihar on payment of the duty of 3½%, the payments to be made at Hugli only. All sorts of extortion under his jurisdiction was prohibited.[5] A few months later Ḍiyā' Allāh Khān himself issued a parwānah permitting the Dutch to anchor their ships at Pipli, Balasore and Hugli or in any other place they liked, to buy, sell and transport their goods at any time and anywhere, to transact business with any merchant they liked and to appoint a native broker to their choice. The goods

1. F.W. Stapel: Op.cit., Vol.IV, p.292.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 293.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 294.

of the Dutch trade were listed as textiles, sugar, silk, wax, salt-petre and other goods of the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. They were also permitted to recover debts from the native merchants and in such cases the government officers were ordered to help them. The customs were to be realised only in the port of Hugli according to the list of goods presented by the Dutch authorities. In all places, the Dutch merchandise was to be allowed to pass unhindered on presentation of the dastak of the Dutch chief at Chinsura.[1] Another parwānah was granted to the Dutch by Ḍiyā' Allāh Khān on 17th September, 1708, confirming the aforesaid privileges.[2] On 21st September, 1708, the Dutch obtained another parwānah under the seal of Sarbuland Khān, Ḍiyā' Allāh Khān and Farrukh Siyar. Apart from confirming the privileges contained in Ḍiyā' Allāh Khān's parwānah, mentioned above, this parwānah granted the Dutch the privilege of purchasing wheat and rice for their own consumption free of duties. The parwānah also provided that for the villages of Chinsura, Baranagar and Mirzapur Bazar which had been occupied by the Dutch from a long time past, no additional impost was to be realised from them except the rent they usually paid to the government.[3] Two days

1. British Museum Add. Ms. No. 29095, pp. 70-71; F.W. Stapel: Op.cit., Vol. IV, pp. 296-98.
2. F.W. Stapel: Op.cit., Vol. IV, pp. 298-300.
3. British Museum Add. Ms. No. 29095, pp. 73-76. F.W. Stapel: Op.cit., Vol. IV, pp. 301-03.

later, the Dutch obtained another parwānah from Farrukh Siyar confirming the above mentioned privileges.[1] A farmān issued by Bahādur Shāh in the second year of his reign reduced the custom duty of the Dutch in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from 3½% to 2½%.[2] The farmān of the emperor and the parwānahs of the provincial officers placed the Dutch almost on the same footing as the English except in the matter of customs. Whereas the English were permitted to trade free of duty on payment of Rs. 3,000 only per year, the Dutch were to pay 2½% duties on all merchanise. When Murshid Qulī Khān was reappointed the dīwān of Bengal, he granted a parwānah to the Dutch confirming the said privileges.[3] It may be recalled that the English had also conducted negotiations with Farrukh Siyar and Ḍiyā' Allāh Khān for obtaining a parwānah, but the negotiations had failed. The English, however, had obtained a parwānah from Sarbuland Khān on payment of Rs. 45,000.[4]

In 1712, when Farrukh Siyar enthroned himself at Patna, the Dutch traders in Patna fell on evil days. In his attempt to collect money to enable him to recruit troops against his uncle Jahāndār Shāh, Farrukh Siyar laid Patna under heavy contribution. On 26th June, 1712, the Dutch chief at Patna, Jacob Van Hoorn, died. The prince

1. F.W. Stapel: Op.cit., Vol. IV, pp. 304-05.
2. British Museum Add. Ms. No. 29095, pp. 41-42.
3. F.W. Stapel: Op.cit., Vol. IV, pp. 387-88.
4. Supra, Chapter IV, Section II.

at once got hold of all the effects of the deceased and also those of the Dutch Company, on the pretext that as the chief had died without leaving any heir, his effects belonged to the king according to the law of the land. The Dutch authorities at Chinsura at once took some of the prince's men into custody and sent message to the prince that their factors should either be allowed to leave Patna or they be allowed to live with full liberty. The servants of the prince valued the confisoated Dutch goods as worth Rs. 1½ lakh and the prince promised to pay the money back to the Company when he should have become king.[1] In October of the same year (1712) the Dutch were obliged to pay the prince Rs. 2 lakh, when the prince realised money from all the traders, merchants and bankers in preparation for his impending war against Jahāndār Shāh.[2]

During the time when Farrukh Siyar was extorting money from the traders, a Dutch embassy was trying in the imperial court at Delhi to obtain an imperial farmān granting them trade privileges in all their settlements, Surat, Coromandel and Bengal. The embassy headed by Johan Joshua Ketelaar had reached the imperial court when Bahādur Shāh was living. Bahādur Shāh had even ordered his officers to issue a farmān to the Dutch, but he died before the

1. Consultations, 7th July, 1712; Journal of the Panjab Historical Society, Vol. X, part I, 1929, pp. 48-51.
2. Consultations, 30th October, 1712.

preliminaries had been completed. The embassy waited in Lahore during the war of succession among the sons of Bahādur Shāh. When Jahāndār Shāh came out victorious and was seated on the throne, the ambassador renewed his negotiations with the new administration to obtain the farmān. The negotiations were successful and after waiting for a few months more, the ambassador received the farmān and the hasb al-hukms.[1] The privileges granted to the Dutch were as follows: -

(a) The customs duty for the Dutch trade in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa which had been reduced from 3½% to 2½% in the reign of Bahādur Shāh was fixed at 2½% and was made payable only in the port of Hugli.

(b) The right of the Dutch to rent the villages of Chinsura, Baranagar and Mirzapur Bazar was confirmed on payment of the usual rent.

(c) The Dutch obtained the right of recovering run-away and deserter servants. The government officers were ordered to assist the Company in recovering their servants.

(d) The Dutch obtained the privilege of minting their coins in the royal mint.

(e) The articles of trade listed in the farmān are

---

1. Journal of the Panjab Historical Society, Vol. X, part I, 1929, pp. 2, 55 ff.

salt-petre, opium, cloths and linen, sugar, wax and other goods.

(f) The Dutch merchandise was to be allowed to pass without hindrance on presentation of the dastaks issued by the Dutch authorities.

(g) The house of the late Nūr Allāh Khān in Patna was given to the Dutch free of charge, but with the solemn promise that they would not fortify the house nor bring there any artillery, but that they would use it only as a residential house or a store house.[1]

Before the ambassador Johan Joshua Ketelaar reached Surat with the imperial decrees, he received the news that the Emperor Jahāndār Shāh had been defeated and that Farrukh Siyar had occupied the throne. It seems that the Dutch also obtained a farmān from the Emperor Farrukh Siyar confirming the privileges granted by Jahāndār Shāh, and in Bengal Murshid Qulī Khān also confirmed the privileges.[2] The privileges were again confirmed by the Emperor Muhammad Shāh in 1729, by Qamr al-Dīn Khān, the grand vizier of the empire in 1737 and by Allāhwardī Khān in 1744.[3]

---

1. British Museum Add. Ms. No. 29095, pp. 42-44; F.W. Stapel: Op.cit., Vol.IV, pp. 395-437.
2. This is implied in his parwānah granted to the French. See Lettres et Conventions, ed.by A.Martineau, pp.19-20.
3. British Museum Add. Ms. No. 29095, f.79-80. See also Bengal: Past and Present, Vol. LVI, 1939, p. 105.

The privileges granted by Jahāndār Shah were mostly to confirm the privileges the Dutch had enjoyed during the time of Bahādur Shāh. The fresh grants were probably the right to use the mint and the permission to occupy the house of Nūr Allāh Khān at Patna. As for the privilege of the use of the mint, it is not definitely known whether the Dutch were allowed the use of the mint free of dues. It is, of course, certain that Murshid Qulī Khān did not allow the Dutch to use the mint free of dues. The records of the English Council in Calcutta categorically state that by 1721 Fateḥchānd Sāhā had obtained the sole use of the mint.[1] A comparative analysis of the position of the English and the Dutch in Bengal shows that the former were much better placed especially after they received Farrukh Siyar's farmān in 1717.

The French

The French East India Company established trade relations with Bengal only towards the last quarter of the 17th century. They first occupied Chandarnagar in 1763 and with the permission of Shāistah Khān, then the sūbahdār of Bengal, established factories at other trade centres.[2] The factory house at Chandarnagar was not com-

1. Supra, p.160.
2. Cambridge History of India, Vol.V., p.72

pleted till 1692.[1] By the end of the 17th century, the French had established their factories at other trade centres like Qasimbazar, Dacca, Balasore and Patna. During the rebellion of Subhā Singh and Raḥīm Khān, the French, like the English and the Dutch, fortified their factory at Chandarnagar and gave it the name of Fort Orleans.[2]

In 1692-93, the French obtained a farmān from Aurangzīb granting the privilege of trade in the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. In pursuance of this farmān Ṣūbahdār Ibrāhīm Khān and Dīwān Kifāyat Khān issued a parwānah to the French, the relevant extract of which is quoted below: -

"He [the French Director] may therefore moor his ships at Hugli, Ingilis, Balasore and such other places as may seem good to him, after he has paid the customs dues on the same footing as the Dutch [3½%]; he may carry his merchandise wherever seems good to him, sell to whom he will, buy from whom he will and take as his broker whoever may seem fit to him. He may buy in the kingdom of Bengal and Orissa, and in the province of Bihar or Patna, cloth, sugar, wax, silk, saltpetre and other goods to send wherever he will." In addition, the parwānah asked the provincial officers to

---

1. The Diaries of Streynsham Master, Vol. I, p. 325, note.
2. H.B.II, p. 395.

help the servants of the French Company to recover their debts from the native merchants and to allow the passage of their goods on presentation of the dastaks issued by the chief of their factory.[1] But the French trade in Bengal did not flourish due to the poverty of the parent company in Paris. The Company passed through evil days and only maintained its existence by selling its license to others. Chandarnagar was always considered to be a settlement of minor importance till the appointment of Dupleix to the intendantship in 1730. "Starved by the parent company in Paris, it had been unable, partly for want of means, and partly also from the want of enterprise on the part of the settlers, to carry on any large commercial operations."[2] The French trade in Bengal in the early 18th century stood no comparison with that of either the English or the Dutch. For a few years preceding the year 1718, the French Company appears to have been obliged to stop sending ships to Bengal as is evident from Murshid Qulī Khān's parwānah, discussed hereafter. But in 1718, M.Ardancourt, the governor of the French Company in Bengal tried to intensify their commercial activities in Bengal. He applied to Farrukh Siyar who issued a farmān granting the French the privilege of trade in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa on payment of 2½%

---

1. Lettres et Conventions, ed. by A.Martineau, pp. 9-10.
2. G.B. Malleson: History of the French in India, p. 67.

customs.[1] In 1722, Murshid Qulī Khān granted them a parwānah in the following words:[2]-

"..... The Company of France having been obliged to suspend its trade and the despatch of its vessels to India for several years because of the war which the king of France has been sustaining against the English, Dutch and other European nations, Monsieur D'Ardancourt, director of the said Comapany has recently arrived with orders to reestablish the Company's commerce; as the Dutch have obtained from the Emperor Farrukh Siyar a farmān which reduces the dues to 2½%, therefore M.D'Ardancourt has sent us his wakīl with a prayer that there be granted to him a parwānah, sealed with our seal, in which the dues of 3½% shall be reduced to 2½% on the same footing as the Dutch; whereupon he engages and promises to pay Rs. 40,000 to the emperor and Rs. 10,000 to the nawāb of Bengal; having received the said 10,000 rupees, we have granted him this present parwānah similar to that of the Dutch until he shall have obtained a farmān from the emperor.

"We make known by this present parwānah that henceforth you shall not demand more than 2½% from the French Company and no one shall arrest their boats or goods or give them any trouble in their trade, for that is

---

1. Lettres et Conventions, ed. by A.Martineau, pp. 15-16.
2. Ibid., pp. 19-20.

strictly prohibited us by the emperor. We will make known the rest when we receive the farmān of His Majesty."

The Danes

The Royal Company of Denmark, established in 1612, started their trade with Bengal from the last quarter of the 17th century. In 1673, two Danish ships first reached Balasore and three years later, they obtained permission from Shāistah Khān, then the sūbahdār of Bengal, to build a factory on the bank of the river Hugli.[1] The Danish factory was established at Gundullapara near the port of Hugli. Another factory was built at Balasore.[2] The Danes tried to obtain from the government the privilege of trading duty-free on the same footing as the English. In 1676, the Danish chief of Hugli told Streynsham Master that they had obtained a parwānah from Shāistah Khān permitting them to trade in Bengal and Orissa free of customs.[3]

It is difficult to determine the position of the Danish trade in Bengal in the early 18th century. In the Consultations of the English Council of Calcutta, which generally record the arrival and departure of ships of other companies as well, there is hardly a reference to the arrival of any Danish ship in Bengal. It may be assumed that the Danish trade in Bengal did not prosper to any

1. S.Bhattacharya: Op.cit., p. 86.
2. The Diaries of Streynsham Master, Vol. I, p. 319. Orme Ms. India Vol. IX, p.2165.
3. The Diaries of Streynsham Master, Vol. I, p. 319.

substantial degree. Moreover, the report of the Danish chief to Streynsham Master that they had obtained permission to trade duty-free does not seem to be correct. The situation became worse for the Danes in 1714, when they had a quarrel with the local government officers and left Bengal for Tranquebar. On their way they seized a Surat-bound Moor ship laden with sugar, silk and other goods.[1] When the Danes left Hugli and proceeded towards Tranquebar, the English Council received a request from the officers of Hugli and later from Murshid Qulī Khān himself to mediate peace between the contending parties and to persuade the Danes to return and carry on their trade as usual. Accordingly, the Council sent several of their members to meet Mr. Attrup, the Danish chief, on board the Danish ship. But the English mediation did not bear fruit, the Danish chief refused to come back but left for Tranquebar.[2]

The cause of the disruption between the government and the Danes is left in obscurity. The Consultation of the English Council simply says, "there having been a difference between the Danes and the Moors government for some time, on which the Danes seized a large Suratt ship."[3] What was the nature of difference is not known. In his letter to the Danish chief, Robert Hedges, the English

---

1. Consultations, 10th December, 1714.
2. Ibid., 21st December, 1714.
3. Ibid.

president, writes, "I am very sorry you are obliged to use violent means to defend yourself from oppression",[1] which gives an impression that the government officers had violently treated the Danes. After being requested by Kurshid Quli Khān to mediate, Robert Hedges writes in another letter, "'tis acknowledged you have reason to suspect the people that deceived you severall times already by treacherous treatys, but 'tis to be hoped you do not suppose such baseness could be approved or encouraged by him who is the greatest man in authority under the king in Bengall [meaning Kurshid Quli Khān] to demonstrate that it was not, he will cause the aggressors to give you full satisfaction for all the injuries that they did you, and reimburse all the charges that you have been forced to for your defence, his proposall and desire now is that you will remain in the river, two or three months in expectation of the king's phirmaund [farmān] which his interest shall solicit for at court and bring without putting you to any charges he will undertake the procuring it and if he fails will acknowledge what you have done deserves no blame and cannot justly be censured by any person living."[2] This letter of Robert Hedges clarifies the situation to some extent. It shows that the officers, probably the custom officers of Hugli were responsible for the quarrel.

---

1. Consultations, 17th December, 1714.
2. Ibid.

Murshid Qulī Khān's attitude to the affair has been clarified by the letter. He put forward concrete suggestions for a reconciliation and undertook to cause the aggressors to give full satisfaction to the Danes, to reimburse all the charges that the Danes had incurred and to get for the Danes a farmān from the king without any charge. In reply to this letter of Robert Hedges, the Danish chief, Mr. Attrup, wrote as follows: -

> "As to the duans offering to deliver the aggressors and pay the charges, it is not to be trusted to, or believed, nor will it be to the profitt of the Royall Company of Denmark, and I think it not safe to trust them who have proved themselves false so often.
>
> "If the duan has a mind to make all things right, he must procure us the phirmaund, he has been paid for fifteen years ago, also they must assure us we are not to have the like usage hereafter.
>
> "As to what they have offered if they design a peace they must now send it to Trincomber, where it will be considered by our governour and councill."[1]

The Danish chief was no doubt very much exasperated by the behaviour of the government officers and thus resolved to leave Bengal without delay. It is probably true that he had paid Murshid Qulī Khān for procuring the farmān,

---

1. Consultations, 21st December, 1714.

otherwise he would not have proposed to procure the farmān for the Danes without any charge. But the claim of the Danish chief that he had paid the dīwān fifteen years before does not seem to be correct because the dīwān had first assumed his office in Bengal only fourteen years before. Moreover, in these fourteen years, the dīwān was absent from Bengal for two years, 1708-09, when Bengal was administered by a new set of officers. As for the suggestion of the Danish chief that the offer of peace made by Murshid Qulī Khān should be sent to Tranquebar for consideration of the governor and council there, it was too much for Murshid Qulī Khān to accept. No doubt, Mr. Attrup gained the upperhand by seizing a Moor ship. With this prize, he sailed for Tranquebar. The Danes came back to Bengal long after, in 1755, during the time of Allāhwardī Khān.

The Ostenders

The Ostend Company was the outcome of the ambition of the Flemish merchants to share the profit of the eastern trade. After the Peace of Utrecht, the Flemish merchants received encouragement from Emperor Charles VI of Austria. The first Ostend ship reached Balasore in 1719.[1] Their ships were manned by crews recruited from the deserters and dismissed servants of the English and Dutch companies. With their knowledge of the eastern lands

1. Consultations, 18th June, 1719.

and their experience of trade, they were in a position to further the interests of their present masters against their former employers. The chief of the Ostenders in Bengal was one Alexander Hume, a run-away English servant.[1]

Though the Ostenders joined pretty late in sharing the profit of Bengal's trade, their activities in Bengal are important both in their relations with Murshid Qulī Khān and with those of the other European companies. Salīm Allāh gives the following account of the Ostenders:[2] -

The Ostenders first established their trade with Bengal through the medium of the French. But ultimately they obtained a parwānah from Murshid Qulī Khān to erect a factory at Bankibazar. They fortified their factory with bastions and ditch. The English and the Dutch bribed Aḥsan Allāh Khān, the faujdār of Hugli, to make representations to Murshid Qulī Khān against the fortification of the Ostenders. Thereupon, Murshid Qulī Khān issued an order to the faujdār to prevent the Ostenders from fortifying the factory. The Ostenders, however, paid no heed to the order of the faujdār, and a war ensued. Mīr Jafar, the deputy faujdār, threw up an entrenchment and blockaded the Ostenders. The Ostenders fired their guns and killed some of the soldiers of the faujdār. Khwājah Muḥammad

---

1. Consultations, 19th September, 1726.
2. T.B., f. 59b-61a.

Fāḍil Kashmīrī, a merchant of Hugli, tried to negotiate a treaty between the Ostenders and the faujdār, but the Ostenders imprisoned the merchant's son Khwājah Muḥammad Kamāl, who had been employed as a go-between in the negotiations. At last the deputy faujdār blockaded the Ostenders from all sides, stopped the coming of provisions from outside so that the Ostenders were reduced to the position of starving. The Ostenders were therefore compelled to leave the place under cover of dark night.

The records of the English Company in Bengal supply more information about the Ostend Company and corroborate the account of Salīm Allāh which describes the first part of the Ostend activities in Bengal. The ship of the Ostend Company which reached Balasore in 1719 had come under French colours.[1] As soon as the English received news of the arrival of an Ostend ship near Calcutta, the Calcutta Council took precautionary measures, so that none of their merchants should have any dealings with the Ostenders. The Council agreed "that we immediately fix papers on our gates and at the corners of all publick streets in the English, Portuguese, Persian and Bengall languages giving publick notice to all our merchants, inhabitants and all people of whatsoever nation that live

1. Consultations, 18th June, 1719.

under our protection that they no ways trade or converse or have the least dealings with any person or persons whatever belonging to the said ship and at any time or times come on shoar within the limits or bounds of our Hon.Masters and be seen by any person or persons whatever that such person do give immediate notice to our guard in order to have him or them apprehended ..... It is further ordered that our jemidar [zamīndār] do beat a drum round and about our towns declaring the same that those inhabitants which cannot read as well as others may be left without excuse in case any person whatever shall show any contempt or disregard this our publick order and either shelter, trade converse or have any commerce with them such person or persons shall not only forfeit whatsoever he is possessed of, but if a subject of England be sent home for further justice or if a foreigner or native bannished the Company's protection."[1] The Council also wrote to John Dean, the chief of the Qasimbazar factory "that he acquaint the Nabob Jaffer Caun of the arrivall of this ship declaring that we know not on what account she is come as not belonging to the English, French or Dutch Companys which he gives publick notice of that the English nation nor the Hon. Company may not be expected to answer

---

1. Consultations, 3rd October, 1720.

for any misdemeaner or outrages they may committ in the Mogull's dominions and that our vacqueel /wakīl/ do immediately and publickly declare the same purport to the phowsdar /faujdār/ etc officers of the Hugly government."[1] The decision of the English Council clearly demonstrates their attitude to the Ostenders. Their representation to Murshid Qulī Khān did not bear any fruit, however, for John Dean wrote back from Qasimbazar "that the nabob has been acquainted with their declaration, in relation to the ship with emperour's colours, the answer he made was, that he did not care what nation they were so they did but bring money."[2] True to his word, Murshid Qulī Khān granted a parwānah to the Ostenders allowing them to trade in Bengal.[3] Failing to prejudice the nawāb against the Ostenders, it is not unnatural that the English should have joined with the Dutch to bribe Aḥsan Allāh Khān, the faujdār of Hugli, to report to the nawāb against the Ostenders. It will be seen presently that the English and the Dutch paid a high amount to the faujdār at a later date to get the Ostenders out of Bengal. If Salīm Allāh's evidence that the Ostenders fortified their factory is correct, the English and the Dutch must have taken advantage of their fortification because they knew quite well that Murshid Qulī Khān was

---

1. Consultations, 3rd October, 1720.
2. Ibid., 1st December, 1720.
3. The parwānah was issued some time before 21st January, 1721, because on that date the English decided to send home a copy of the parwānah. Consultations, 21st January, 1721.

dead against any fortification by the European companies. The war between the Ostenders and the faujdār may be put some time in 1724. The Consultation of 13th April, 1724 records that Murshid Qulī Khān was incensed at the disturbance between the Ostenders and the faujdār at Hugli, and the Consultation of 15th June, 1724 records that the Ostenders were in actual and open war with the Moor government. The details of the war are not available. Salīm Allāh's evidence that the Ostenders left Bengal under cover of darkness may be correct because when a ship of the Ostenders reached Bengal next year, they first tried to obtain Murshid Qulī Khān's permission to bring the ship up the river. But even if they left Bengal, it was but for a short period, because from 1725 onward, they are found making purchases in Bengal. In October, 1725, the English Council decided to advance dādnī to the merchants at 10% more than the usual, because they apprehended/[a]rise of the price of goods due to heavy demand by "Ostenders, Dutch and others."[1] The Ostenders continued to purchase goods from Qasimbazar, Dacca and Balasore and from all these places the English factors complained of the Ostend competition and the rise of the prices of commodities.[2] The Ostenders applied to Murshid Qulī Khān for a fresh

---

1. Consultations, 4th October, 1725.
2. Ibid., 19th Sept., 10th Oct., 1726: 9th, 23rd Jany.,1727.

parwānah granting them the privilege of trade on the same terms as the Dutch and the French and also for procuring an imperial farmān for them. Murshid Qulī Khān referred the matter to the faujdār of Hugli and asked him to report about the suitability of granting the privileges to the Ostenders.[1] In Balasore the Ostenders were introduced to the faujdār by Khwājah Saffar, an Armenian merchant, and the faujdār permitted them to build a factory anywhere they liked.[2] The English on the other hand combined with the Dutch against the Ostenders and offered the faujdār of Hugli a sum of Rs. 1,25,000 to have the Ostenders out of Bengal.[3] The English also instructed their members of the Qasimbazar factory to do everything possible to create bad impression in the mind of Murshid Qulī Khān against the Ostenders. The Qasimbazar factors succeeded in alienating Fatehchānd (Jagat Seth) who did not show any interest in the Ostenders affairs.[4] The Ostenders visited the nawāb several times and were almost likely to succeed. On one occasion the nawāb ordered a sar-o-pā for the Ostend chief, but on representation from the faujdār of Hugli the sar-o-pā was cancelled.[5] Towards the beginning of 1727, the Ostenders made a concrete suggestion to the nawāb. They agreed

1. Consultations, 5th September, 1726.
2. Ibid., 3rd October, 1726.
3. Ibid., 13th February, 1727; Bengal letters received, Vol.I, letter dated 27th January & 18th February, 1727.
4. Consultations, 15th May, 1727.
5. Ibid., 27th February, 1727.

to pay Rs. 1,20,000 to the nawāb if he granted them the privilege of trading in Bengal on the same terms as the Dutch.[1] Sarfarāz Khān, the nawāb's grandson and dīwān of Bengal (spelt Sedyforous in the Consultation) welcomed the offer and tried to influence the nawāb to change his mind.[2] At last it was agreed that the Ostenders should pay Rs. 1,00,000 for the emperor and the nawāb would procure for them the emperor's farmān permitting them to build factories and to trade in Bengal on the same terms as the Dutch and the French. When the farmān was received, the Ostenders would pay another 50,000 rupees, Rs. 25,000 each for the nawāb and Sarfarāz Khān. According to this agreement, the Ostenders paid Rs. 30,000 to the nawāb and deposited another Rs. 70,000 in the bank of Jagat Seth, and received from the nawāb a sar-o-pā.[3] Soon after, the nawāb died; he could not procure the imperial farmān for the Ostenders but granted a parwānah only a fortnight before his death.[4] After the nawāb's death the Qasimbazar factors wrote to the Calcutta Council that they would do all within their means to get the parwānah granted to the Ostenders by the late nawāb nullified by the new administration.[5]

---

1. Consultations, 17th April, 1727.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 22nd May, 1727.
4. Ibid., 12th June, 1727.
5. Ibid., 12th July, 1727.

Murshid Qulī Khān's relations with the other European companies is not known in as much detail as his relations with the English. The real cause of the quarrel between the government and the Danes which compelled the Danish chief to seize a Moor ship and to leave Bengal is not known. But it may be said with certainty that the negotiations of the other companies with Murshid Qulī Khān for procuring a sanad were not as protracted and uncertain as those of the English. The reason was that the other companies had no problem like the union of the two English Companies. The Dutch had been able to procure a farmān from both Bahādur Shāh and Jahāndār Shāh while the English could procure none. As the French trade did not prosper, their relations with Murshid Qulī Khān were less important, while the Ostenders having started afresh, applied to Murshid Qulī Khān alone and tried to procure the imperial farmān through him.

Chapter V

EFFECTS OF MURSHID QULĪ KHĀN's RULE UPON THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Section I

Economic Conditions

The economic history of Bengal in the 18th century has been studied by several modern scholars.[1] It is not the intention here to tread the beaten track but to seek to show how far Murshid Qulī Khān's administration affected the economic life of the country and to look for changes taking place in his period. Some of Murshid Qulī Khān's measures draw attention as likely to have moulded the country's economy. They were the transfer of his headquarters to Murshidabad, the checking of the private trade of government officers, his revenue reforms, the maintenance of peace from internal and external dangers, his providing for the safety of roads from thieves and robbers by establishing thānahs and the firmness with which he dealt with the European companies.

Transfer of the capital

The transfer of the dīwānī secretariat and later

1. S. Bhattacharya: East India Company and the Economy of Bengal; J.C. Sinha: Economic Annals of Bengal; N.K. Sinha: Economic History of Bengal from Plassey to Permanent Settlement, vol. I.

the sūbahdār's residence meant the shifting of all departments of provincial stature from Dacca. The new headquarters at Murshidabad gave Murshid Qulī Khān an opportunity to administer the provinces of Bengal and Orissa more effectively. With his deputies at Dacca and Balasore and he himself more centrally stationed at Murshidabad, he could keep a more vigilant eye on the territory under his jurisdiction. The loss of the dīwānī and sūbahdārī establishments reduced Dacca to a subordinate position. Certainly, the settlement or resettlement of the English factory at Dacca in 1723[1] and the intensification of the English, Dutch, French and Ostend activities at Dacca during the later years of Murshid Qulī Khān's rule and after his death[2] does not suggest that the exports from Dacca greatly diminished. But the removal of numbers of officials with their large staff of clerks, treasurers, peons and the like, and of some of the mansabdārī contingents obviously withdrew a market for provisions and supplies from Dacca to add it to Murshidabad. Moreover, there were also important administrative consequences for the two cities. The shifting of the capital automatically drove the landed and trading interests from Dacca. Those people who used to throng to the capital

---

1. Consultations, 19th January, 1723.
2. Home Miscellaneous Series, vol. 456F, pp. 91-106; S. Bhattacharya: Op.cit., pp. 161-166.

either to secure privileges from the provincial officers like dīwān or sūbahdār or to safeguard their existing interests, also left for Murshidabad.[1] But probably the greatest blow to Dacca came from the establishment of the pachotrabandar at Murshidabad.

A study of the East India Company's records after the acquisition of dīwānī of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1765 shows that the Mughals had established four ports (bandars) in the eastern provinces to control the trade and commerce of the country and to collect customs dues. They were the bakhshbandar of Hugli, the shāhbandar of Dacca, the pachotrabandar of Murshidabad and buzurgbandar (budrekabandar in the records) of Patna.[2] The first, that of Hugli, was designed to collect duties from external commerce, that is from goods exported and imported through that coastal port, while the last, that of Patna, was to collect duties from both internal and inter-provincial trade. The ports of Dacca and Murshidabad were established to collect duties from the internal commerce of eastern and western Bengal respectively.

---

1. According to Salīm Allāh (T.B., f.29a), while transferring the dīwānī, Murshid Qulī Khān came to Murshidabad from Dacca accompanied by zamīndārs, qānūngos and other officers.
2. The words bakhsh, shāh, buzurg are Persian, the first meaning division and the last two meaning great. Pachotra is from pañchottara meaning customs in an extended form. The names do not suggest the difference in their nature; probably they were merely official usage.

It is difficult to give a precise date for the establishment of these bandars. Keeping in view the political condition of the country, it may be surmised that the Mughals had at first established a bandar at Dacca, when the town became the capital in the early 17th century. The Hugli bandar may have been established after the expulsion of the Portuguese in 1632.[1] (The need for controlling the external commerce through Hugli may have been one of the reasons why Shāh Jahān had expelled the Portuguese.) As will be seen presently, Hugli came to prominence after Satgaon lost her importance owing to the silting of the rivers. The origin of Patna as an inland port is also obscure, though as with Hugli it may have owed its rise to natural causes, in this case the decline in importance of Rajmahal due to the change of course of the river Ganges.[2] Although Murshidabad (then Makhsūsābād) had been an important centre of trade in the 17th century and the residence of a collector of customs as known from the diary of Hedges,[3] there is no evidence to show that the pachotrabandar had been established there before the transfer of the dīwānī by Murshid Qulī Khān. Be that as it may, the pachotrabandar of Murshidabad took away half the jurisdiction of the

1. H.B. II, p. 323.
2. Tavernier: Travels in India, vol. I, p. 125.
3. The Diary of William Hedges, vol. I, pp. 58-59, 85-87.

shāhbandar of Dacca.

Even if Dacca lost her primary importance, the decentralisation of the customs-receiving authority may have well facilitated the speedy movement of goods for that and all other ports of Bengal. Instead of looking to one port or one port authority for the payment of their customs dues and issuing of passes, traders could now turn to alternative ports according to nearness and other advantages. On the other hand, the multiplication of authorities may also have meant the exploitation of merchants by unscrupulous officers and collectors of customs, though under the strong rule of Murshid Qulī Khān, it may be assumed that the abuse of their powers by customs officers did not get out of control.

The rise of Patna and Hugli has been attributed to the failing of rival centres as the result of geographical changes. The most striking of these changes were in the fortunes of the towns on the Hugli. Until the seventeenth century both Satgaon and Chittagong had been important rivals of Hugli. Chittagong was the ancient port where the Arabs, the Chinese and the Portuguese came every year to carry on trade, and its natural advantages have been made obvious by its present rapid growth. But Murshid Qulī Khān, no more than his Mughal predecessors was able to take advantage of its facilities because of the danger of attacks by the Maghs of Arakan and Portuguese

pirates.[1] The alternative had been Satgaon, the Porto Pequeno of the Portuguese, on the Saraswati river. It was the progressive silting up of the port which led to the rise of Hugli. During this period Hugli became the most prominent Bengal port, the trade emporium through which passed the great bulk of goods imported and exported into and from Bengal. Alexander Hamilton, indeed, makes Hugli the sole centre for Bengal's overseas trade "because all foreign goods are brought thither for import and all goods of the product of Bengal are brought hither for exportation."[2] A Consultation of the time of Streynsham Master reads as follows: "The Councell haveing taken into Consideration and debate which of the two places, Hugly or Ballasore, might be most proper and convenient for the residence of the Cheife and Councell in the Bay, Did resolve and conclude that Hugly was the most fitting place, notwithstanding the Europe Shipps doe unloade and take in their ladeing in Ballasore roade, Hugly being the key or scale [centre of trade] of Bengala, where all goods pass in and out, to and from all ports, and being neare the Center of the Companyes business, is more commodious for receiving of advices from

---

1. See chapter II, pp. 97-98, for an account of Magh attacks during this period. See also Wilson I, p. 132.
2. Alexander Hamilton: A New Account of the East Indies, vol. II, p. 12.

and issuing of orders to all subordinate Factoryes."[1]

The Mughals administered Hugli through a faujdār and a host of under-officers to look into the customs payable by the traders. An idea of the volume of goods that passed through the port may be obtained from the fact that the total customs duties in 1728 were calculated to be Rs. 29,289 -8-1-3.[2] Yet, even in Murshid Qulī Khān's day the pre-eminence of Hugli city was threatened by the establishment of factories of the foreign companies at other points on the banks of the Hugli, which developed into busy centres of the export and import trade of Bengal; as also of manufacture for that trade. In particular the Calcutta towns settled by the English towards the end of the seventeenth century came to excell all others, foreshadowing their important economic and political influence in later years. This growing English power Murshid Qulī Khān steadily attempted to check and regulate, but he could not prevent the overshadowing of Hugli. The able management and administration of the towns by the Company[3], a body devoted to mercantile interests, and the rapid expansion of the volume of the English trade, led eventually to the steady growth of Calcutta. Even in this development, however, geographical

1. The Diaries of Streynsham Master, vol. I, p. 500.
2. The Sixth Report, Appendix 14.
3. Wilson, I, pp. 196-97.

factors played their part. Balasore had been an important centre for the foreign companies, pushing up from their settlements on the Coromandel, partly as a source of supplies, but also because by its use the risks of the tricky navigation of the Sand Heads could be avoided. Those hazards were accepted when Calcutta was founded -- but the town's position on the lower reaches of the Hugli was dictated in part by the fact that deep water channels and anchorages were there available which were not so at Hugli town. On the question of building a warehouse at Calcutta in 1713, the Court of Directors enquired from their servants in Bengal whether Calcutta was not more advantageous to the country merchants than Hugli. The Court wrote, "Since it [warehouse] is not begun and you now say such a Warehouse will not in two or five years defray the first cost building, being so chargeable with you don't begin it [,] Butt at the same time woul'd have you well consider and send your opinion with impartiality and honesty to us on the following Queries viz. Whether the Countrey Merchants do not trade to Suratt Persia or other places yearly from Bengal [,] Whether they do not send their Goods on Europe or European's Shipping, whether such goods are not providing by them all the year long to be

ready against the time of Shipping, whether if such Goods are lodg'd at Calcutta and they could be sure they were safe there and to be come there whenever they would, the Warehouse Rent at Calcutta being at as cheap a Rate as it costs them Hughley would not in a few years and in how many pay for the charge of building substantial and fit Warehouse for that use_/ ,_7 whether such Goods so housed at Calcutta could not with more ease and expedition to shift off thence on freight than from Hughley....[1] The points raised by the Court of Directors show that they studied the position more correctly than their servants in Bengal. The advantages thus afforded by Calcutta attracted more and more merchants and it is in this process that Calcutta ultimately overshadowed Hugli.

Murshid Quli Khān checked the private trade of officers

The factory records of the English Company make it clear that in Gujarat, or Coromandel and in Bengal the Mughal officials and nobles took part in trade. The most striking example of such private trade was provided by the activities of Mīr Jumlah in his Golconda days but the stimulus of large scale commercial activity by European merchants seems to have prompted an increase in Mughal activity everywhere. Certainly, the practice was common in

1. Quoted by Wilson in Old Fort William in Bengal, vol. I, p. 96.

Bengal before Murshid Qulī Khān's day.[1]

The profitability of such trade, the temptation to indulge in it, arose from the noble's ability to turn his official power to private ends. Moreover, as Bernier's account of his patron Dānishmand Khān shows, many nobles must have had capital available for investment as the administration of the mansabdārī system grew more lax. They might enter into partnership with European or Indian merchants, but alone or in concert with the others, they could often rig the market in their own favour.By placing difficulties in the way of their competitor they secured some sort of a monopoly of the manufactures of their post or jāgīr which enabled them to buy cheap and then sell dear. Such private trade was extortionate in two ways. It is very likely that they exercised their authority to buy the goods at an artificially low price. In fact, there is evidence that the producers were very reluctant to sell their goods to the officers or their agents and sometimes ran away from the manufacturing stations to evade selling at a low price, especially as collection of the purchase money was often difficult.[2] The monopoly of goods also meant that the price

1. C.f. W. Foster ed.: The English Factories in India 1637-41, p. 77; 1661-64, pp. 67,69, 395; T.B., f.24b.
2. Ibid., 1661-64, p. 395.

of commodities rose high not only for the traders but also to the consumers. The officers may have also tried to evade paying customs, particularly when a higher officer like a sūbahdār was involved. Important officers or nobles who took part in such unfair trade were Mīr Jumlah, Shāistah Khān and Aʿẓīm al-Shān, prior to Murshid Qulī Khān's rule and Ḥājī Aḥmad, brother of Allāhwardī Khān, after Murshid Qulī Khān's death.[1] It is gratifying to note that during Murshid Qulī Khān's time no such evil practice is on record. Murshid Qulī Khān was always aware of any threat to the revenues and prosperity of the country, and the absence of reports of private trade by government officers in his time may well indicate that he took steps to discourage it. If our assumption that Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Khān was dismissed[2] because he indulged in such detrimental private trade proves true, then our belief is strenghtened. Such an example could not have failed to curb officials' interference in the normal course of trade. Murshid Qulī Khān's relations with the European companies also show that he tried to keep the companies in check from the abuse of their power of issuing dastaks[3], and stealing a march upon those merchants and

1. W. Foster ed.: English Factories in India, 1661-64, pp. 67, 395; T.B., f.24b; S. Bhattacharya: Op.cit., p. 146.
2. Supra, p. 65.
3. Supra, pp. 192-195, 239, 293-294.

traders who could not procure as much privilege as the companies or were not as organised as the latter.

Creation of a new official class

During Murshid Qulī Khān's time Bengal and Orissa witnessed the rise of a new class of officials centering round the administration and the capital. An important effect of the decline of the Mughal central power and the concentration of power in the hands of Murshid Qulī Khān was to isolate Bengal and Orissa from the main current of central politics. From the accession of Farrukh Siyar in 1713, the practice of sending officers from the centre to fill provincial post was practically stopped.[1] It has been seen that all the key-posts in Murshid Qulī Khān's day were entrusted to the relatives and favourites of Murshid Qulī Khān, men whose appointments received only the post-facto approval of Delhi. This policy had far-reaching effects on the country's body-politic. Again, we find many more Hindu officials in the court of Murshid Qulī Khān than at any previous time. The influence of these officers is clear from our discussion in the previous chapters. Raghunandan, for example, was so influential that through his machinations his brother Rāmjīvan obtained a great zamīndārī in Rajshahi,

1. H.B., II, p. 410.

Bhushna and Murshidabad.[1] Darpa Nārāyan Qānūngo, not only obtained the pīshkārī of khālṣah[2] in addition to his qānūngoship but also secured zamīndārī in Malda.[3] Jagat Seth's influence, of course, almost placed him in a class of his own. The officers depending on Murshid Qulī Khān and clinging to the administration obtained appointment or promotion or secured the zamīndārī either for themselves or for their relatives and indeed formed a class by themselves. Attention was not now divided among the sūbahdār, dīwān, bakhshī and other imperial officers, each with his own proteges, and his own links with the imperial court, but was focussed on Murshid Qulī Khān or upon his relatives and favourites, Sayyid Akram Khān, Sayyid Raḍī Khān and Sarfaraz Khān as dīwāns; Muḥammad Jān, Walī Beg, Mīr Nāṣir, Mīr Abū Ṭālib, Bakhsh ʿAlī Khān, Aḥsan Allāh Khān and Saif Khān as faujdārs; Bhupat Rāi, Krishna Rāi, Darpa Nārāyan, Jai Nārāyan, Shiv Nārāyan, Raghunandan, Lahori Mall etc. as secretaries, collectors, qānūngos, mint-officers and holders of other assignments relating to revenues. These officers had their own followers, wakīls, gumashthas and other dependants, all looking to Murshid Qulī Khān at the head of the

---

1. T.B., f. 38a, 61.
2. Ibid., f. 42a.
3. Consultations, 26th August, 1723.

administration, as the sole benefactor. Similarly, Murshid Qulī Khān controlled Orissa, through his son-in-law Shujā' al-Dīn Muḥammad Khān and grandson Muḥammad Taqī. Dacca was controlled through his relatives Itiṣām Khān and his son. This new class of officers added a fresh stimulus to the administration which would have met confusion with the decline of the Mughal empire, under a less able ruler and less efficient officers. Their solidarity and cooperation with the administration also created a balance against the new class of moneyed people that was growing round the foreign settlements, of which more will be said later.

Effects of revenue reforms

Murshid Qulī Khān's revenue reforms have already been discussed[1] and some tentative conclusions may be drawn. If it is true that he fixed the revenues after an actual survey of land and looking to the capacity of husbandmen to pay, it means that he was not unmindful to the people's benefit. Indeed, Salīm Allāh's narratives of his reforms give the impression that he tried to free the raʿyats from the extortion of the zamīndārs and collectors. In his assessment, Murshid Qulī Khān increased the revenues by 13½% over and above the settlement of Shāh Shujā' in 1658.

1. Supra, pp. 124-150.

As the rate of assessment appears to have been moderate[1], it seems that the increase should be attributed to the extension of cultivation. Moreover, the continued peace in the time of Murshid Qulī Khān must have helped the cultivators, while the increase of exports[2] put money in their hands. As Jadunath Sarkar[3] puts it, "..... the internal peace which he [Murshid Qulī Khān] sternly enforced on the country increased the people's tax-paying power and therefore a larger revenue in his last ten years did not necessarily mean any increased extortion." We do not hear of any famine in the country during Murshid Qulī Khān's time except the one in 1711[4] and even in that year the famine did not prove serious. On the other hand, the efficiency of Murshid Qulī Khān's revenue collections and the regularity with which he despatched the revenues in cash to Delhi, to the tune of one crore of rupees a year, necessarily had its effect upon the economy. (We may deduce from the fact that the revenues were sent in cash either that the machinery was lacking for its transfer by bills of exchange, or more probably that the balance of trade between Bengal and the up-country areas made such credit transfers impossible.) A comment of Mandeville, quoted by

---

1. Supra, p. 142.
2. See infra, pp.347-54
3. H.B. II, p. 413.
4. Consultations, 9th July, 1711.

James Steuart[1], suggests that at the time of the annual despatch of the revenues there used to be a shortage of coins in circulation and a consequent slowing down of trade, but the growth of trade revealed in the English records must suggest that such effects were only temporary.

Increase in the exports of the country

Apart from the headquarters of the foreign companies, many inland towns on the banks of rivers were developed or continued as trade centres, such as Murshidabad, Qasimbazar, Azimganj, Rajmahal, Malda, Dacca, Makhdumpur and Jagdea. These inland towns served both the internal and foreign trade of the country. The most notable effect of Murshid Qulī Khān's rule is found in the increase of the exports of the country. It is not known whether Murshid Qulī Khān took any positive steps to expand trade and commerce — steps like improving the communications system, improving the technique of manufactures and agriculture. In the Mughal system, the duty of building the roads and works of other public benefit like the establishment of bāzārs (market places), ghāts (loading and unloading stations), bridges etc devolved upon the zamīndārs.[2] It is not unnatural, therefore, that we do not

1. James Steuart: Op.cit., p. 63.
2. Colebrooke & Lambart: Remarks on the present state and husbandry of Bengal, p. 46.

get any reference to Murshid Quli Khān's interest in these affairs. Movement of goods in the 18th century was most convenient by water and Bengal is so gifted by nature that river communication is hardly a problem in Bengal. To quote Major Rennell[1], "the Ganges and Burrampooter [Brahmaputra] rivers together with their numerous branches and adjuncts, intersect the country of Bengal in such a variety of directions as to form the most complete and easy inland navigation that can be conceived. So equally and admirably diffused are the natural canals, over a country that approaches nearly to a perfect plane, that, after excepting the lands contiguous to Burdwan, Birbhoom, etc. which may be reckoned a sixth part of Bengal, we may safely pronounce that every other part of the country has, even in the dry season, some navigable stream within 25 miles at furthest, and more commonly within a third part of that distance." It is unnecessary to dilate further in the subject of river communications, because the geography of Bengal as it at present stands is no different to what was seen by Rennell in the 18th century. What Murshid Quli Khān could do was to make sure that these river ways, as also the roads, were kept open for traffic. It is possible to list from the English records a number of chaukis, like

1. Rennell: Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan, p. 245.

those of Rajmahal, Azimganj, Murshidabad and Qasimbazar, whose staff had the duty not only of collecting customs but also of preventing attacks by river pirates. In the same way, Murshid Qulī Khān is known to have established thānahs to suppress theft and robbery on the great highway through Burdwan.[1] Salīm Allāh clearly states that Murshid Qulī Khān freed the traders from extortion[2] and the statement of the same author that the zamīndārs were only allowed nānkar or subsistence allowance[3] probably suggests that Murshid Qulī Khān limited the zamīndār's tolls upon commercial traffic. For the travelling merchants there were numerous sarāis in the trade routes; thus John Marshall lists a great number of them on his way from Hugli to Patna[4]. That Murshid Qulī Khān was keen to give facilities to the travellers and travelling merchants is borne out by the fact that he himself built a kātra (halting station for travelling merchants) in Murshidabad.[5] The absence of serious complaints by the Europeans of danger on roads or rivers suggests that Murshid Qulī Khān's measures met with success. But the greatest boon to trade was the maintenance

---

1. T.B., f. 62b.
2. Ibid., f. 46a. The relevant extract has been translated and quoted by Jadunath Sarkar (H.B. II, p. 419).
3. Ibid., f. 31a.
4. John Marshall in India, edited by Shafaat Ahmad Khan, pp. III ff.
5. T.B., f. 68a.

of general peace. Peace in the country means a cumulative effect resulting in an overall improvement -- in agriculture, manufacture, movement of goods and increase of exports. The safety of roads facilitated the easy transport of goods from one place to another both by small and big entrepreneurs.

It is not possible to obtain any total figure of the production of the country during this period. The foreign writers and travellers of both 17th and 18th centuries, from Bernier and Tavernier to Orme and Stavorinus, praise Bengal for the fertility of her lands and enormous production of all goods -- agricultural and industrial. But no satisfactory statistical picture can be formed from their general statements. What is possible, however, is to show an increase in the export of goods from Bengal, Bihar and Orissa by some of the European companies.

The English trade in Bengal expanded in the early 18th century. A study of their investment from 1704 - 1727 shows that there was a gradual rise in the volume of their exports from Bengal. It is not possible, however, to get a total figure of their exports year by year throughout the period under review because of the lapses in the records. During the early years, the Council used to record the ships despatched to Europe or other settlements and the goods provided therein, but in later years when the

procurement became more and more systematised, they enclose in the Diary and Consultations only lists of investments made in Calcutta and the lists of contracts made with the merchants in Calcutta. But these lists of investments contained only the amount of raw silk, silk and cotton goods to be procured during the year. The list of goods to be provided by the subordinate factories as also the list of such bulk commodities, usually bought for ready money in the open market without previous contract, as salt-petre, cowries and lac are, therefore, not available. Nevertheless, some idea of the volume of exports by the English may be obtained from the Diary and Consultations of the Calcutta Council.

During the season 1704-05, the English despatched two ships to Europe, the Tavistock, carrying goods worth Rs. 249,650 and the Scipio, carrying goods worth Rs. 262,600.[1] In the next season, 1705-06, the English despatched four ships to Europe, the Northumberland on 7th December, 1705 with a cargo worth Rs. 118,837½ and on 21st December, 1705, the Westmoreland with a cargo valued at Rs.57,550 plus 115,000 pieces of silk cloth. On 15th January, 1706, the Hern sailed with a cargo of Rs. 242,860 and on 23rd February, 1706, the Wentworth with goods valued at

1. Consultations, 30th May, 24th August, 1704.

Rs. 242,920.[1] Besides, one ship, the Union was despatched to England by the New Company.[2] In the year 1709-10, there was a substantial increase in the investment of the English Company in Bengal. The Council contracted for raw silk, silk and cotton goods alone worth Rs. 1,792,340.[3] During the following few years up to the year 1718, the investment of the English moved round about this last mentioned figure. Thus in 1717-18, the first list of investment in raw silk, silks and cottons was Rs. 1,302,043/12/- and the additional list added another Rs. 267,162, while there were also laded considerable quantities of shell and stick lac, turmeric, cowries and tincal, and enough saltpetre to stiffen the ships.[4] In the next year, 1718-19, the first list of investment in raw silk, silk and cotton goods was Rs. 863,625 and the additional list added another Rs. 1,011,875, while the list of other bulk commodities is not available.[5] The Company's investment in Bengal increased further in 1719 and this position continued till the end of Murshid Quli Khan's rule. In the season 1719-20, the first list of investment in raw silk, silks and cottons was Rs. 1,704,231/4/- and the additional list added

---

1. Consultations, 7th July, 17th August, 1705.
2. Ibid., 25th December, 1705.
3. Ibid., 17th January, 1709.
4. Ibid., 2nd May, 24th June, 25th July, 1717.
5. Ibid., 19th May, 10th July, 1718.

Rs. 649,643/12/-. Besides, the first list of investment adds 2700 pieces of silk and cotton piece goods of different size and price, and the Patna factory supplied 30,566 maunds of salt-petre and 40,000 pieces of silk and cotton goods.[1]

In 1726-27, the last year of Murshid Qulī Khān's rule, the Council prepared three lists of investments for raw silk, silks and cottons, valued at Rs. 2,262,312/8/-, 267,206/4/- and 810,962/8/- respectively.[2] These are excluding the goods provided by the subordinate factories, the lists of investments for which are not available. The list of bulk goods is also not available. The total tonnage of goods provided and despatched to Europe is stated to be 3960 tons of which 700 tons were provided from Madras. Thus Bengal provided a total of 3260 tons of goods in 1726-27. The export of the English Company, therefore, shows an upward trend from 1704-05 to 1726-27, the export of the last mentioned year having risen by about 8 times (or more) above that of 1704-05.[3]

We may recapitulate with the following table — which takes note only of the investments reported in money

---

1. Consultations, 6th April, 20th April, 14th July, 1719.
2. Ibid., 28th March, 15th August, 22nd August, 1726.
3. Similar results are obtained from the study of the import of bullion and merchandise by the English to Bengal. See Bal Krishna: Commercial Relations between India and England, p. 217.

terms and ignores additional items of piece goods and such items as salt-petre etc, not reduced to money terms. The figures for 1704-05 and 1705-06 represent the value of goods despatched to Europe, while those of later years represent the value of goods contracted with the dādnī merchants for ultimate despatch to Europe.[1]

1704-05	Rs. 512,450
1705-06	Rs. 662,167/8/-
1709-10	Rs.1,792,340/10/-
1717-18	Rs.1,569,205/12/-
1718-19	Rs.1,875,500
1719-20	Rs.2,353,875
1726-27	Rs.3,340,481/4/-

It is generally believed that the increase of the English exports from Bengal after 1717 was due to the impetus they had received on the receipt of Farrukh Siyar's farmān.[2] But as has been seen[3], Murshid Qulī Khān denied the English the extra privileges granted to the English by the farmān. He denied the English both the right to coin money in the royal mint free of dues and the renting of 38 more villages round about Calcutta. The effect of

1. The figures have been obtained by calculation of the price of goods despatched or contracted as found in the Consultations.
2. C.f. S. Bhattacharya: Op.cit., p. 166.
3. Supra, pp. 267-71.

the farmān, as far as the English were concerned, was to confirm only the former privileges. The reason for the increase of exports must, therefore, be sought elsewhere. It should be attributed in the first place to the rise of productive power of the country resulting from the continuance of peace by Murshid Qulī Khān. That the increase was not only due to the receipt of Farrukh Siyar's farmān may be clear from the fact that the English trade shows an upward trend from 1704-05. As will be seen presently, the Dutch trade also increased, although their privileges were less sweeping than those of the English.

Although the Dutch were gradually losing ground in Bengal's trade in comparison with the English, they were the next most important exporters of Bengal goods during the period under review. In the initial period, the diary of the English Company records the arrival and departure of all ships to and from Bengal. In 1704, for example, 7 Dutch ships and 2 French ships reached Balasore.[1] The English Council became so much concerned at the news of their arrival that they decided to purchase goods in haste for fear that the Dutch and the French would purchase all the goods offered for sale.[2] The Dutch exported Bengal goods

1. Consultations, 13th March, 1704.
2. Ibid., 17th March, 1704.

both to Europe and to other Asiatic countries. An idea of the volume of Dutch export from Bengal and Bengal's place in the trade in relation to other Dutch Asiatic settlements may be obtained from the following table of bullion and coins imported from Batavia by the Dutch: -[1]

	Total fl.	Bengal %	Bengal's total fl.
1713-14	5,263,307	60	3,157,984 $\frac{1}{5}$
1715-16	5,989,163	52	3,114,364 $\frac{19}{25}$
1718-19	10,090,549	50	5,045,274 $\frac{1}{2}$
1721-22	7,931,105	50	3,965,552 $\frac{1}{2}$
1723-24	9,290,511	47	4,366,540 $\frac{17}{100}$
1724-25	10,491,126	60	6,294,675 $\frac{3}{5}$

As has been stated above, the French trade in Bengal did not prosper during the viceroyalty of Murshid Quli Khan. Their trade only received any considerable momentum from 1730 when Dupleix became the director of the Company in Bengal. The Danes left in 1714, while the Ostenders, though they began well with their investment were opposed by the English and the Dutch before they could establish their position firmly in Bengal.

1. Bengal: Past and Present, vol. LXXVI, p. 35.

An idea of the nature of goods exported from Bengal may be obtained from the list of investments and the list of goods provided in the ships. Besides the raw silk, silk and cotton goods, the most important items of export were salt-petre, cowries, shell lac, stick lac, nux vomica, pepper, redwood and turmeric. China wares and tea exported from China were also re-exported from Bengal.[1] The English also sent rice, wheat, gunnies, rope, salt-petre, oil, and butter to the Fort St. George at Madras. Sometimes raw silk, silk and other goods were also sent.[2] The other companies also exported much the same items of goods, though the Dutch exported opium, rice and wheat to their settlements in the East.[3] But the raw silk, silk and cotton goods always dominated the export lists of all the companies. The lists of investments of the English in Calcutta bear this out. Of the total export of Rs. 512,450 worth of goods in 1704-05, the share of raw silk, silk and cotton goods was worth Rs. 385,750 i.e. more than ¾ of the total export.[4] In the later years, the total exports of raw silk, silk and cotton goods increased extremely fast so that in 1726-27 these

1. See for example list of goods provided in the ships Tavistock and Scipio in 1704 in Consultations, 30th May, 1704, 24th August, 1704. The lists of investments for raw silk, silk and cotton goods are also available in the Consultations.
2. C.f. Consultations, 31st July, 1707, 28th March, 1709, 21st January, 1717.
3. Bengal: Past and Present, vol.LXXVI,p.36.
4. The figures are obtained by calculation of the goods provided per ships Tavistock and Scipio in 1704. (See Consultations, 30th May, 1704, 24th August, 1704.)

goods alone were exported worth more than Rs. 3,200,000.[1] Of the total Dutch export from her Asiatic settlements to Holland in 1697, Bengal subscribed one third, while of the total import of silk and cotton goods Bengal supplied 50 per cent.[2]

The most important articles imported to Bengal by the European companies were bullion, copper and lead. The English Company imported different types of woollen cloths, generally called broad cloth, woollen fabrics called perpetuanoes, lead, copper, iron, iron wares, tutenague, vermillion, madeira wine, fire arms, looking glasses and a variety of finer articles, generally called rarities.[3] The Dutch imported spices, tin and copper from their eastern settlements.[4] The sale proceeds of these imported articles were never enough, however, to provide for the increasing amount of goods exported from Bengal. Indeed, while broad-cloth remained a staple item in English imports to Bengal there could be but little hope of increasing the sale proceeds. There was some demand in Patna and at the capital, Delhi — but the problem of persuading the Bengali to exchange his dhoti for broad cloth was clearly insoluble.

---

1. Lists of investments for 1726 quoted above.
2. Bengal: Past and Present, vol. LXXVI, pp. 31-32.
3. C.f. Consultations, 27th August, 1722.
4. Bengal: Past and Present, vol. LXXVI, p. 36.

Sometimes they tried to dispose of the broadcloths by giving them to the merchants in lieu of dādnī (advance), but the merchants never welcomed the offer and on occasions refused to accept any broadcloth in lieu of dādnī for the goods they contracted to provide.[1] Copper and lead and other articles of import were also in some demand, but they never in quantities stood comparison with the amount of goods exported. So the companies had to pay for their exported goods in hard cash either brought from Europe or earned in other parts of the Asian trading system. It has been stated already that during the period under review Murshid Qulī Khān allowed the traders to strike their coins in the royal mints on payment of customs. The Dutch and all other merchants and bankers utilised this privilege and got their bullion coined in the royal mint. The English also minted their coins in Dacca but did not do so in the Murshidabad mint where they would have had to pay customs, because they claimed[2] that they were allowed the privilege of minting coins free of customs. The bullion could also be disposed of by sale to the merchants and bankers who paid sicca rupees in exchange according to the standard rate. During the period from 1704-1727, the English

---

1. For a detailed discussion on the subject see S.Bhattacharya: Op.cit., pp. 167-174.
2. The question has been discussed at pp. 267-71.

imported to Bengal bullion worth £21,040,119.[1] It was such imports which made possible the despatch of 1 crore of rupees to Delhi each year.

Other merchants

Besides the European companies, there were a large number of private merchants who carried on trade with Bengal. Mention may be made of the servants of the English Company who carried on private trade under cover of the Company's privilege, the English free merchants, the Moors, the Armenians and the native merchants. The English servants in Bengal who were paid an extremely low salary,[2] were allowed to carry on private trade both inland, to the Coast and to other Asiatic countries. Many of these servants had their own ships which they utilised for carrying on private trade. On occasions they also lent their ships on hire to other merchants and even to the Company, which on occasion used them for voyages to Madras or Surat. The free merchants also had their own ships which they utilised for carrying on the coastal and inter-Asian trade. Sometimes they also lent their ships on hire. (The Company kept a vigilant watch over the free merchants so that they should not carry on trade with Europe: thus in 1705, the Calcutta Council

1. Bal Krishna: Commercial Relations between India and England, p. 217.
2. The question has been discussed by S. Bhattacharya in East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, pp.142-146.

refused a pass to the free merchant Charles Fleetwood because they suspected that he was carrying on such trade.[1] The Armenian and Moor merchants also carried on a considerable export trade. Most of them had their own ships, though there are records of their hiring ships from the free merchants, the English Company's servants or even from the Company. If the Company's Europe-bound ships remained idle due to a late season and could not be sent to Europe, they were used to freight the goods of these merchants. In 1705, Baranasi Seth, a native merchant, freighted the Company's ship, the Loyal Hester, on payment of Rs. 30,000 for carrying goods to Persia.[2]

The shipping of free merchants and Company's servants when combined with that of Indian and Asiatic merchants, gives a very considerable total engaged in the export/import trade of Bengal. Thus during the season 1705-06, the following ships carrying goods of individual merchants received passes from the English Council at Calcutta:[3]

---

1. Consultations, 29th October, 1705.
2. Ibid., 29th November, 1705.
3. Information gathered from Diary and Consultations Book. Unfortunately such diaries are not uniformly maintained throughout the whole period under review.

Date	Name of ship	Name of owner	Port of destination
21 Nov.1705	Pearle, 60 tons	Ralph Sheldon & others	Malabar
"	Elizabeth, 60 tons	Ralph Sheldon & others	Acheen
"	Hopewell, 40 tons	Robert Hedges & others	"
"	Goodhope, 200 tons	John Scatterwood & others	Persia
29 Nov.1705	Loyal Hester	English Company, freighted by Branasi Seth	"
30 Nov.1705	Dolber, 200 tons	Ralph Sheldon & others	Pegu
"	Unity -	-	Surat
1 Dec.1705	Mamanick Ellie / Mubārak Alī ? / 200 tons	Ḥakīm Maḥmūd & Ḥājī Ḥusain	Persia
3 Dec. 1705	7 Moor ships	-	Balasore to Maldive islands
7 Dec.1705	St. George	Ralph Sheldon & others	Surat
18 Dec.1705	3 Moor ships	-	one to Coromandel
		-	one to Persi
		-	" " Acheen
21 Dec.1705	1 Moor ship	-	Coromandel
26 Dec.1705	Loyall Cook	-	Persia
31 Dec.1705	Mary	President Pitt of Madras	Mocha
4 Jan.1706	1 Moor ship	-	Persia

Date	Name of ship	Name of owner	Port of destination
7 Jan.1706	Muhammadi 80 tons	Mīr Ilāhī Yār	Maldives
9 Jan.1706	Vintegurry	Alexander Hamilton	Surat
9 Jan.1706	1 Moor ship	_	Persia
11 Jan.1706	1 Moor ship	_	Persia
18 Jan.1706	Ossonee, 100tons [Ḥusainī?]	Ḥajī Maḥmūd Zamān	Maldive Islands
19 Jan.1706	Fateh Ilāhī 300 tons	Allāh Yār Khān	"
22 Jan.1706	Dorothy, 70tons	Ralph Sheldon & others	Mocha
22 Jan.1706	Bucharest	_	Surat
7 Feb.1706	Mary Galley	_	Batavia
7 Feb.1706	Sarah, 45tons	Ṣāleh al-Dīn	Batavia.

The above chart speaks for itself. It shows the volume of goods exported from Bengal by the private traders over and above those exported by the European companies. In one season, 33 ships of various tonnage were despatched from Bengal to different Asiatic countries. Of these 33 ships 19 belonged to the Moors, one was freighted by Baranasi Śeṭh, a Hindu merchant and the rest belonged to the European private merchants. The chart further shows that among the individual traders, as distinguished from the companies, the Moors controlled more than half of the trade with the Asiatic countries. It is, however, difficult to be sure of

the meaning of the term Moors used in the English records. No Armenian merchant is specifically mentioned in this chart, although they were very active in the country's trade and might have been expected to appear.[1] Probably, by the term Moor, the English records meant the Muslim merchants from Arabia and Persia.

Local traders

The above figures, incomplete though they are, show that the trade of Bengal under Murshid Quli Khān was flourishing and expanding. But, one may ask, how far did this expansion lead to the emergence of the body of local merchants, brokers and bankers, or how far did the handling of the growing trade remain in the hands of foreigners?

It is clear from the earlier discussion of the farmāns of the European companies that they enjoyed a number of advantages over local traders: the English payment of Rs. 3,000 a year in lieu of all customs duties had clearly become of no account when their investment had risen to over three million rupees a year and the position is little changed even if the bribes they had to give are taken into

1. For example, the names of Khwājah Sarhad, Khwājah Dailān, Khwājah Āratun, Khwājah Ābid may be cited. They were so rich that sometimes they competed with the companies in procuring goods. These Armenian merchants also carried on trade with the Asiatic countries. For details see S. Bhattacharya: Op.cit., pp. 163-64.

consideration. The Dutch, French, Danes or Ostenders paid 2½%, and so were on no more than even terms with Muslim traders. But the European companies -- and their servants indulging in private trade under cover of company privileges-- had the great advantage of being able to put pressure upon Mughal officials for redress of grievances, even to the extent of using force against them. Muslim merchant families had no such redress. The Armenians and Hindus, moreover, both had to pay 5% customs dues, as a hasb al-hukm of Aurangzīb, preserved in the Diary and Consultations shows.[1] The hasb al-hukm issued under Asad Khān's seal in the 47th year of Aurangzīb's reign (1703) was addressed to Mīr Abū'l Qāsim, the dīwān of Bihar, who had asked for clarification of a former order about the Dutch. The English translation is as follows: " .... The order you [Mīr Abū'l Qāsim] received formerly to take of the Armenians five per cent custome as of those that pay jeizia (or a duty account their religious recognition) and they [the Dutch] gave answers they were not Armenians but Dutch to which you replied the Christians gave formerly three and half per cent and that now you must pay five per cent as all those that pay jeizia, your saying that you are Armenians, Dutch or any other, that all stands for nothing, all this I observe, bute: do

1. Consultations, 11th July, 1704. See also Bengal: Past and Present, vol. LVI, p. 102.

you understand that this order relates only to the Armenians, as for the English and Dutch you are to let their business goe on as customary."[1] It seems reasonable to assume that a very considerable share in the growing export trade of the country was handled by the European companies which enjoyed such advantages.

Of the ships receiving English passes in 1705-06 which were listed as Moors, whether they were Persian or Arabian is unknown, though names like Ḥusainī are suggestive. (It is not clear, likewise, whether the Company lumped Armenians in with Muslim merchants: they were certainly very active at this period in Bengal.) It is known, however, from the Company records that some of the Muslim and Armenian merchants trading in Bengal did not make Bengal their home, for when they died the English Council at Calcutta was asked to take charge of their goods, until their heirs could come from the homeland to claim the effects.[2] Bārānasī Śeṭh, mentioned as freighting a ship, was, however, a native of Bengal, for he belonged to a family of English brokers who claimed to trace their origin to the first group of Śeṭhs and Basāks who had been inhabitants of Calcutta before the occupation of the place by the English.[3]

---

1. Consultations, 11th July, 1704.
2. C.f. Consultations, 2nd May, 1720.
3. For details see Bengal: Past and Present, vol. LXXIX, pp. 42-43, Wilson I, p. 135.

The English records also supply other evidence from which to draw certain tentative conclusions. Where the names of suppliers of goods such as salt-petre, cowries, lac, pepper, rice and wheat are given, or the names of purchasers of such imports as copper, lead, broadcloth and china-ware etc, Armenian and Muslim names predominate with only a rare Hindu name.[1] Such names do not permit any statement about the origin of the merchants.

Of the banking firms which figure in the records as money-changers or bullion brokers, and also as occasional traders, few again seem certainly Bengali. Thus in 1705 the firms which handled the remittance of English funds to Patna were the following:[2] -

> "Rs 20,000 by Futtachund [Fatehchānd] and Annuchund [Anandchānd] in Hugly to be paid by Mannickchund Ramchund [Mānikchānd Rāmchānd] at Patna. Rs 20,000 by Lolgee [Lālājee] and Burgeeboocun [Brijabokun] in Hugly to be paid by Suddernand [Sadānanda] and Lulgee at Patna. Rs 10,000 by Sewdut [Shiv Datta] and Mittersein [Mitra Sen] in Hugly to be paid by Sucdusaw

---

1. C.f. Consultations, 3rd, 4th, 16th April, 24th August, 23rd September, and 19th October, 1704.
2. Ibid., 31st December, 1705.

/Sukhdev Sāhā/and Sewdut in Patna. Rs 10,000 by Himutsing /Himmat Singh/ and Lumersing /Lakshman Singh?/ in Hugly to be paid by Kissoraw /Kiśore?/ and Munsawmant /Māneśwar Nāth?/ in Patna."

Of these only Shiv Datta and Mitra Sen are certainly Bengali names. Himmat Singh, Lakshman Singh, Lālājee, Brijabokun, Māneśwar Nāth were probably upcountry merchants. Mānikchānd Rāmchānd and Fateḥchānd Anandchānd were the firms of the great banking house of Mānikchānd Sāhā who was succeeded by Fateḥchānd Sāhā, the first holder of the title of Jagat Śeṭh. These bankers are often mentioned in the Consultations as they used to send the Company's funds to the subordinate factories by bills of exchange. They also traded in commodities and often supplied goods to the English Company.[1] It has been stated already that during the later years of the period under review the banking firm of Jagat Śeṭh overshadowed all others and gained a great influence upon Murshid Qulī Khān.[2] The family of Jagat Śeṭh came from Marwar in Rajputana.

One other group was of great importance at this period — the dādnī merchants and the brokers working for

---

1. C.f. Consultations, 13th August, 21st August, 1711.
2. Supra, pp. 159-162.

the European companies. The dādnī merchants, who contracted for the supply of goods to the English Company are named in the list of investments -- and it is notable that all of them were Hindus, most of whom are clearly Bengali coming from the class of weavers.[1] Again, of the brokers appointed at Calcutta, all were Hindus, as can be seen from the list for the years 1704-1732:[2] -

1.	Dīpchānd Bella	from 1704-1706
2.	Janārddana Śeṭh	" 1706-1712
3.	Bārānasī Śeṭh	" 1712-1715 and again
		" 1719-1724
4.	Rām Kissen [Rām Kṛishṇa]	" 1715-1716
5.	Harināth	" 1716-1719
6.	Baishṇava Dās Śeṭh	" 1724-1732.

Of these brokers, No. 1, Dīpchānd Bella, was obviously an upcountry Hindu,[3] Nos. 2,3 and 6 belonged to the family of Śeṭhs who claim to have been the original inhabitants of Calcutta,[4] while Nos. 4 and 5 by their names seem to have been natives of Bengal.

---

1. For a discussion on the subject see Bengal: Past and Present, vol. LXXIX, pp. 44-45.
2. Consultations, 11th May, 1704, 18th October, 1706, 11th February, 1712, 4th April, 1715, 28th April, 1715, 6th August, 1716, 14th April, 1719, 9th November, 1724.
3. Bengal: Past and Present, vol. LXXIX, p. 45.
4. Ibid., pp. 42-43, Wilson I, p. 135.

The rise of both these groups was phenomenal. The Council normally advanced them dādnī, sometimes to the tune of 75% of the price of the contracted goods. They also made it their rule to use the same merchants year after year so long as their dealings were fair. The result was that an able merchant, even if he had no great capital of his own initially, could rise to be an important figure in the market. The records show, in fact, that men who at the beginning of the period contracted to supply goods worth only a few thousand rupees, ended by contracting for more than a lakh. The Company brokers, the link between Company and dādnī merchants, and thus able to control both, also often made fortunes, especially if their relatives could be installed as dādnī merchants.[1]

The importance of these middlemen, the real gainers from the rise of the foreign companies, was that they introduced a new power in Bengal. While at Murshidabad Murshid Qulī Khān was creating a new official class, the nucleus for an independent state of Bengal, a powerful moneyed class was being formed round the settlements of the European companies. Many of both groups were Hindu, and the Marwaris were particularly important; when in 1757 the strength of the ruling dynasty was pitted against that of the English Company their attitude was to prove crucial.

1. The position of the brokers and their accumulation of fortune in the early 18th century has been discussed by Benoy Ghosh in Bengal: Past and Present, vol.LXXIX, pp. 42-55.

Section II

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

A period of twenty seven years is but a brief span of time in the social life of a people. Society is a continuous growth, its institutions take shape in a variety of ways, only slowly responding to the forces of time and tide. Epoch-making events take place but very rarely. In Bengal such epoch-making events took place in the 13th century when Islam was introduced and in the 16th century when the great reformer Chaitanya Deva started the vaishnava movement. Murshid Quli Khān's time did not witness any such event. His time, therefore, saw a continuation of the social life of the past in to the future. Murshid Quli Khān's character as painted by Salīm Allāh and some of Murshid Quli Khān's activities show that he was not unmindful to the social progress of the people under his jurisdiction.

Murshid Quli Khān's character

Salīm Allāh supplies sufficient evidence on the character of Murshid Quli Khān. According to him Murshid Quli Khān possessed extensive learning, wrote with elegance and was a remarkable penman. His skill in arithmetic en-

abled him to scrutinize all the accounts himself. He was a brave soldier, a liberal benefactor, upright and just in all his dealings.[1] A favourite work of Murshid Qulī Khān was to make copies of the Qur'ān and to distribute them with valuable offerings to such holy places as Mecca, Medina, Najaf, Karbala, Baghdad and to famous shrines like that at Panduah. For each of these places he allotted votive offerings and sent them through the pilgrims.[2] Besides being a learned man himself, he encouraged learning and honoured scholars and men of erudition. He made no retrenchment in the royal grants or in the grants of former provincial officers for charitable purposes and for learned and scholarly men rather increased them.[3] He maintained about 2,500 readers, beadsmen and chanters who were engaged in reading the Qur'ān and performing other acts of devotion.[4]

The private life of Murshid Qulī Khān was exemplary. At a time when it was a common practice for the emperor and nobles to be steeped in wine and infatuated

---

1. T.B., f. 66a.
2. Ibid., f. 63b. The historian Ghulām Ḥusain Salīm saw a copy of the Qur'ān in Murshid Qulī Khān's handwriting in the shrine of Shaikh Akhī Sirāj al-Dīn in Malda. Riād, p. 281.
3. T.B., f. 67a.
4. Ibid., f. 63b.

with women, it is gratifying to note that Murshid Qulī Khān possessed a pure character. He slept very little and observed the stated times of prayer. From breakfast to noon he engaged himself in copying the Qurʾān and administering justice. Neither did he amuse himself with singers and dancers. He was devoted to one lawful wife and out of excess of his delicacy, would not allow any strange woman or eunuch to enter the private appartments of his residence. If a female servant went out of his harem, he did not allow her access to the harem again.[1] In his dress and diet also Murshid Qulī Khān led a simple life. He despised all the refinements of luxury particularly in dress and refrained himself from everything prohibited by the Islamic law. No highly seasoned dishes were served at his table, neither frozen sharbat nor creams, but only plain ice. He was, however, particularly addicted to the mango and Salīm Allāh describes how mangoes were collected by his servants with the help of zamīndārs from all parts of Bengal.[2] He never indulged himself with spirituous liquors or any intoxicating drugs. Murshid Qulī Khān was a staunch and faithful follower of his religion. Besides saying the prayers regularly, he used to recite the holy Qurʾān and keep fasts for three months a year including the obligatory

1. T.B., f. 66a; Riād, p. 281.
2. T.B., f. 66a,b; Riād, p. 284.

fast of the month of Ramaḍān. He also kept a fast on the 12th and the 13th of every lunar month.[1] Apart from celebrating the great Muslim festivals, Salīm Allāh describes his particular interest in observing the birth day of the Prophet. During the first twelve days of the month of Rabī' I, Murshid Qulī Khān feasted the people of all conditions. About 2,000 readers and chanters were engaged by him during the occasion. On those nights the roads from Mahinagar to Lalbagh, a distance of about three miles, were illuminated with lamps, arranged as verses of the Qur'ān, mosques, trees and other figures. A great number of people were employed for lighting the lamps which was done simultaneously on the firing of a gun.[2] (Salīm Allāh even goes so far as to say that during this occasion, besides feeding multitudes of people, Murshid Qulī Khān also provided food for the beasts of the field and fowls of the air.[3]) Though Murshid Qulī Khān was a Shī'a, he did not fail to enjoy the company of the Sunnī scholars.[4] As for the judicial decisions of Murshid Qulī Khān, Salīm Allāh states that he was extremely fair, without any partisan spirit, and he compares Murshid Qulī Khān with those

1. T.B., f. 63a, b; Riāḍ, p. 281.
2. T.B., f. 64a, b; Riāḍ, pp. 282-83.
3. T.B., f. 65a.
4. Ibid., f. 63a.

monarchs who are most renowned for their equity and justice.[1] Such a character among the ruling class as that of Murshid Qulī Khān demands admiration, the more so as his attention to his religious duties did not prevent him from also being an efficient administrator.

Much of Salīm Allāh's account of Murshid Qulī Khān's character might seem to be conventional panegyric -- though written long after the subject was capable of rewarding praise -- if it did not in fact agree with what is otherwise known of Murshid Qulī Khān. Trained by two leading nobles, favoured by Aurangzīb, notable for the success of his administration there is no reason at all to doubt his learning and ability. Praise of Murshid Qulī Khān as a soldier is more difficult to accept since the only battle in which he is recorded as ever having taken part, that against Rashīd Khān, general of Farrukh Siyar,[2] comes to us only in the narrative of Salīm Allāh. For his piety, patronage of learning and justice, however, there is again wider evidence -- both negative, in the absence of adverse comment in the company records -- and positive in

1. T.B., f. 63a; Riād, p. 281.
2. Supra, pp. 74-80. Murshid Qulī Khān strongly resisted Farrukh Siyar's forces (see pp.74-80)/sent against him which suggests that he was an able organiser if not a great warrior.

the statements of Salīm Allāh and Salīm and his actions in building mosques, madrasah,[1] his copying the Qurʾān and appointing Qurʾān readers. With Salīm Allāh's general picture of the man as learned, pious and just, there seems little to quarrel. In so far as the personal life and qualities of Murshid Qulī Khān influenced public standards of conduct he was on the side of the angels.

Education

The cultural life of the people is best illustrated by the education they receive. Although there is no trace of any state organised educational system in Bengal, facilities for education were generally available to the young. Both the Muslims and the Hindus had their own institutions, for primary and for higher education. For the Muslims all mosques served the purpose of maktab (primary school) where boys and girls of tender age were taught through the study of the Qurʾān and other elementary religious subjects. The same person who led the prayers also served as teacher. That the ruins of many mosques of the Mughal period show them to have had two storeys, the ground floor serving as maktab,[2] suggests that there was a deliberate

1. The construction of two mosques is attributed to Murshid Qulī Khān -- one mosque at Dacca, known as Kārṭalab Khān's mosque and a mosque-cum-madrasah-cum-kātra in Murshidabad. W. Hodges: Travel in India, p. 18. A.H. Dani: Muslim Architecture in Bengal, pp. 202, 275.
2. For example, Khān Muḥammad Mirdhā's mosque built at Dacca in 1706. See Dani: Dacca, pp. 99-100.

attempt on the part of the builders to provide educational facilities for the children of the surrounding areas. The khāniqahs of the Muslim saints and the Imāmbārahs of the Shiás also served as the houses of learning. In addition, schools and colleges built for the purpose were scattered in different part of the country. Sayyid Ghulām Ḥusain refers to many Muslim learned men and scholars whose main business was to impart education to the people.[1] The families of the learned men and scholars who received grants and stipends from the Mughal government also maintained educational institutions. Many of these institutions survived during the early British rule and were noticed by the early English writers. Buchanon Hamilton, for example, reports of the existence of many such institutions with teachers and pupils in Bihar.[2] The towns of Patna, Murshidabad and Dacca were seats of learning. Of Bihar Sayyid Ghulām Ḥusain writes as follows: "There were in those times in ʿAẓīmābād [Patna] numbers of persons who loved sciences and learning, and employed themselves in teaching and in being taught; and I remember to have seen in that city nine or ten professors of repute and three or four hundred students or disciples; from whence may be conjectured the number of those that must have been in great towns, and in the retired

1. Siyar, II, p. 165 ff.
2. Martin: Eastern India, vol. I, pp. 46, 133.

districts."[1] Though Ghulām Ḥusain's account relates to a slightly later period, it gives an idea of the trend of Muslim education in the country. Moreover from the biographical sketch of a few learned men as given by the same author, it is evident that most of the learned men or their forefathers had migrated to the eastern provinces even prior to the time of Murshid Qulī Khān. It seems therefore that Ghulām Ḥusain's account of the Muslim education applies to the time of Murshid Qulī Khān as well. It is known that in Murshid Qulī Khān's own day, Asad Allāh, the zamīndār of Birbhum was a great patron of learning. He granted lands to learned men and thus encouraged them in the pursuit of learning .[2] In Murshidabad the education of the Muslims was encouraged by Murshid Qulī Khān himself. He was himself a learned man and paid great respects to those who were eminent for their piety and erudition.[3] Though rather tight fisted, Murshid Qulī Khān built a madrasah (school or college) to provide facilities for Islamic learning. The madrasah, known as Kātra Madrasah of Jafar Khān (because the building also housed a kātra or residence for travelling merchants), could be noticed in ruins towards the end of the 18th century.[4] At Dacca, the Mughal government

1. Siyar, II, p. 175.
2. T.B., f. 31b.
3. Ibid, f. 63b.
4. W. Hodges: Travels in India, p. 18.

maintained an institution for the Muslims. It was housed in the Shāhī Masjid of Lalbagh and the salary of the teacher was paid by the government. The last teacher of this institution whose name has come down to us was Maulavī Asad Allāh who died in 1750.[1]

The curriculam of the higher Muslim education included chiefly the Arabic and Persian languages, Islamic theology, medical science and astrology. That the Persian language was mastered by the people is borne out by the fact that a number of Persian chronicles were produced in Bengal during the second half of the 18th century. Many of the nobles were highly learned men. Murshid Qulī Khān himself was very learned though his chief contribution was confined to copying the Qurʾān. Mirzā Luṭf Allāh, husband of Murshid Qulī Khān's granddaughter, was a Persian poet who took the poetical name Makhmūr.[2]

There was also provision for both the primary and higher education of the Hindus. What the Hindu ideal was Rāmprasād finely described in his long Bengali poem, Vidyā Sundara, written a few years after Murshid Qulī Khān's death. He pictures the town Vardhamāna, whose people are all happy and contented, free from disease, sorrow and trouble and from any taint of irreligiousness. All are dressed finely. Vocal and instrumental music are practised in every

1. Taylor: A Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca, pp. 273-74.
2. Maʾāthir al-Umarā, vol. III, p. 753.

house. The people never speak except in verse; even a cowherd sings saṁkīrtana so that an outsider could hardly distinguish between a paṇḍit and a peasant. Poverty is unknown to the people of Vardhamāna. Everywhere there are chatuspāṭhīs (higher institutions) where learners gather from all parts, Drāvida (south India), Utkala (Orissa), Kāśī (Benares) and Tirhut (Bihar). Temples are found abundantly, where guests from all over the country are entertained. There are people versed in the Vedas, the Agamas, in astrology and in astronomy and all are respectful to their own religion.[1] Such an ideal state was difficult to achieve, but that there was fair provision for the Hindu education seems clear enough. In almost all villages primary schools were to be found where the young pupils were trained in the three R's, reading, writing and arithmetic. These schools were called pāṭśālās and were maintained by the villagers themselves, often aided by the philanthrophy of the zamīndārs and other rich men.[2] Śuvankara, the famous Hindu arithmetician probably flourished during the later part of the 17th or early part of the 18th century. His system, prevalent in the schools even in the present century

1. Rāmprasād: Vidyā Sundara, pp. 14-15.
2. D.C. Sen: Baṅga Bhāshā O Sāhitya, pp. 397, 450.

(before the introduction of a decimal coinage in both Pakistan and India) was taught in the pāṭśālās of Bengal.[1] Higher education was provided in the chatuspāṭhīs which were to be found in important towns and villages. The medium of instruction in the higher institutions was Sanskrit. Nadia was a seat of learning from old times,[2] and the diaries of Streynsham Master record the existence of a college in Nadia.[3] The college certainly continued during the time of Murshid Qulī Khān and even long after. The Hindus also learnt Persian, the official language as a means of entering the state services. During the period under review, almost all the wakīls appointed by the English Company were Hindus but they were proficient in the Persian language so that they could skilfully discharge their diplomatic duties.[4] The poet Bhārat Chandra learnt the Persian language in the house of Rāmchandra Mushī of Hugli.[5] There seems to have been many such Hindu munshīs teaching the Persian language to their own people, for even the ordinary contracts with the dādnī merchants were in Persian.[6]

---

1. J. Long: Adam's reports on vernacular education of Bengal and Bihar, p. 97.
2. For the position of Nadia on the advent of Chaitanya Deva see Chaitanya Bhāgavata, pp. 11, 44.
3. The Diaries of Streynsham Master, vol. I, p. 328.
4. The names of Rājārām, Śivacharan, Rājballabh may be cited.
5. B. C. G., preface.
6. C.f. Consultations, 24th June, 1704.

It is not known whether Murshid Qulī Khān took any steps other than the foundation of his madrasah for the teaching of Persian but his widespread use of Hindu officers in senior posts must have encouraged Hindus to learn Persian, both as the technical language of the administration, and as the cultivated language of the court circles.

The Bengali language received attention both from the people and the nobility. Bengali literature had received patronage from the early Muslim rulers of Bengal and during the Mughal period Bengali literary works were produced on a considerable scale. Some of the famous poets of Bengal flourished during the 18th century. Both Bhārat Chandra and Rāmprasād were born in the time of Murshid Qulī Khān and wrote their books in the middle of the 18th century. The date of composition of two works, Śivāyana and Satya-Nārāyana of another famous poet Rāmeśwar Bhaṭṭāchārya is controversial.[1] There is, however, no doubt that Rāmeśwar Bhaṭṭāchārya lived during the time of Murshid Qulī Khān, though the date of composition of his books may be put to a few years later than the death of Murshid Qulī Khān. Other books whose composition have been dated to the time of Murshid Qulī Khān with some degree of centainty are

---

1. For controversy see Rameśwar Bhaṭṭāchārya: Śivāyana, preface.

Balarāmdās's Krishnalilāmrita, Śaṁkara Chakravartī's Rāmāyana, and Mahābhārata, Kavirāj Fakirrām's Laṁkākāṇda (part of the Rāmāyana)and Satya-Nārāyana, Kavi Chandra's Rāmāyana, Rāmjīvan's Manasāmaṅgal and Suryamaṅgal, Ghanarām Chakravartī's Dharmamaṅgal, Premdās's Chaitanya Chandrodaya kaumudī and Baṅgśī Śikshā and Narasiṁha Basu's Dharmamaṅgal.[1] The Muslims also produced a great number of Bengali books in the Mughal period but it is not definitely known how many of them were written in the time of Murshid Qulī Khān.

Educated people occupied a position of honour and respectability in society. Sayyid Ghulām Ḥusain's account of the learned men shows that some of them were not even afraid of the nawāb or the influential nobles in denouncing the unjust proceedings of the officers.[2] Though this hardly proves that all the learned men possessed so independent a spirit and so high sense of justice as to lead them to denounce the abuse of power, it does suggest that the learned were generally looked upon with respect. To this the strong Shīa element in the Bengal administration may have contributed, for as E.G. Browne has indicated the mujtahid was a man of power and influence in his community.

---

1. Sukumar Sen: Bāṅgālā Sāhityer Itihāsa, pp. 700, 706, 760, 761, 780, 790, 800, 821-22.
2. The examples of Shāh Jafarī and Shāh Ḥaidarī may be cited. Siyar II, pp. 172-177.

The simple and unostentatious Hindu pandits also occupied positions of honour. Sundara, the hero of Bhārat Chandra's Vidyā Sundara was allowed entrance to the town of Vardhamāna by the guards as soon as they saw his khungī (basket containing reading and writing materials), punthi (book) and dhoti (a kind of wrappers used by the pandits).[1] Almost all the poets wrote their books on the patronage of the zamīndārs or other rich people, who were in turn eulogised by the poets. Bhārat Chandra was the court-poet of Mahārājā Kṛishṇa Chandra, the zamīndār of Nadia.[2] Rāmprasād first received a monthly stipend and then a grant of land from the same person.[3] Rāmeśwar Bhaṭṭāchārya wrote his book Śivāyaṇa under the patronage of Rājā Rāmsiṁha of Midnapur.[4] Saṁkara Chakravartī received patronage from Raghunāth Siṁhadeva and his son Gopāl Siṁhadeva of Bishnupur.[5] Rāmjīvan composed his book at the order of the head of his village (whom the poet calls mahārājā)[6] and Ghanarām Chakravartī received patronage from Mahārājā Kṛittī Chandra of Burdwan.[7] Narasiṁha Basu, the author of Dharmamaṅgal was the wakīl of Asad Allāh Khān, zamīndār of Birbhum to the court of Murshid Qulī Khān.[8] It is not known whether Asad Allāh Khān encouraged the poet to write his book, though

1. B.C.G., pp. 190, 193.
2. B.C.G., preface.
3. Rāmprasād: Vidyā Sundara, preface.
4. Sukumar Sen: Op.cit., pp. 812-13.
5. Ibid., 706-07.
6. Ibid., p. 780.
7. Skumar Sen: Op.cit., p. 789.
7. Skumar Sen: Op.cit
8. Ibid., p. 800.

he is known to have been a great patron of scholars.[1]

Patronage of the Sayyids

The Sayyids were the descendants of the Prophet and thus commanded respect and veneration from other Muslims. Ever since the first arrival of the Sayyids in Bengal they had occupied a prominent position in the Muslim society and had received grants and stipends from the Muslim rulers.[2] Sayyid Ghulām Ḥusain gives a list of Sayyids and other learned men who received patronage from Allāhwardī Khān,[3] while Murshid Qulī Khān's respect for the Sayyids is borne out by Salīm Allāh. Two Sayyids, Sayyid Akram Khān and Sayyid Raḍī Khān were successively appointed dīwān of Bengal during the time of Murshid Qulī Khān and at his recommendation./ It is true that one of them, Sayyid Raḍī Khān, was related to Murshid Qulī Khān by his marriage with the latter's grand daughter, but there is no trace of any such personal relationship between Murshid Qulī Khān and Sayyid Akram Khān. Another Sayyid, Saif Khān, was appointed faujdār of Purnea at the recommendation of Murshid Qulī Khān.[4] Such appointments may well have been made purely on personal ability, and not from any desire to conciliate a group. Salīm does stress, however, that Murshid Qulī Khān

1. T.B., f. 31b.
2. A. Karim: Social History of the Muslims in Bengal, pp. 52-54.
3. Siyar II, pp. 70, 166-185.
4. T.B., f. 30b, 39b, 45b.

showed a great predilection for the company of the Sayyids, the Shaikhs, the scholarly and the pious and deemed it meritorious to serve them.[1]

The Shīá population

The Muslim population of Bengal during this period belonged to both the Sunnī and Shīá pursuasions. The early Muslim conquerors of India were Sunnis and hence the Muslims who migrated to India during the early years of Muslim domination belonged largely to the Sunnī group, though the Shīás were not altogether absent. It is not definitely known whether the Shīás spread further east to Bengal during the Sultanate period, though in South India they were found in considerable numbers.[2] The presence of Shīás in the eastern provinces may be attributed with more certainty to the establishment of the Mughal rule. From the description of the Muslim population of an imaginary town Birnagar by Mukundarām, a late 16th century Bengali poet it is inferred that the Muslims of the poet's description belonged to the Shīá group.[3] The first big immigration of the Shīás to Bengal is dated to the middle of the 17th century during the viceroyalty of Shāh Shujā' who was a

1. Riad, p. 282.
2. Titus: Indian Islam, p. 86; Hollister: The Shia of India, pp. 104 ff.
3. J.N. Das Gupta: Bengal in the 16th century, p. 93.

patron of the men of letters and is said to have recruited many Shīás in the Bengal administration.[1] During the 18th century Bengal witnessed a succession of Shīá ṣūbahdārs beginning with Murshid Qulī Khān. The nominal nawābs of Bengal after the battle of Plassey were also all Shīás. Sayyid Ghulām Ḥusain's list of Muslim learned men of Allāh-wardī Khān's time contains many names of Shīá religious teachers.[2] Although Murshid Qulī Khān was a Hindu by birth, he was brought up by Ḥājī Shafī', a Shīá of Iran. Some of Murshid Qulī Khān's relatives, related to him through Ḥājī Shafī', came to Bengal and obtained posts under Aurangzīb. It is very likely that other Shīás also migrated to Bengal under the patronage of the Shīá rulers, so that according to Jadunath Sarkar, Hugli became a famous Shīá colony during the time of Murshid Qulī Khān,[3] before the full growth of Murshidabad. It seems, however, that in spite of the immigration of the Shīás in a greater number during the 18th century they remained few compared to their Sunnī counterparts. In modern times the Shīás are found mainly in the towns but rarely in the villages. In spite of their numerical inferiority they must have formed an important element in the society as may be discerned from the Shīá

1. H.B., II, p. 335.
2. Siyar II, pp. 166-185.
3. H.B.II, p. 419.

influence on the Bengali literature produced by the Muslim writers.[1] The absence of any reference to the Shīás by Bhārat Chandra and Rāmprasād who have left an account of the composition of the society in the 18th century is, however, significant. It does not mean that the Shīás were absent in Bengal. Both the poets wrote their books in the time of Allāhwardī Khān who was himself a Shīá. Only four years later than Bhārat Chandra composed his book, Sirāj al-Daulah built the Îmāmbārah of Murshidabad.[2] The silence of the poets probably indicates that the two sects of Muslims, the Sunnīs and the Shīás lived in harmony so that the existence of sects among the Muslims did not attract the notice of the non-Muslim poets.

Hindu-Muslim relation

By the time of Murshid Qulī Khān, Islam had enjoyed about five hundred years' existence in Bengal. By the continued Muslim rule, the immigration of the foreign Muslims and the activities of the Muslim saints, the number of Muslims had steadily increased in Bengal. Living side by side for such a long time, the Muslims and the Hindus necessarily influenced one another to a certain degree. The influence of one community upon the other is clearly

---

1. E. Huq: Muslim Bengali Literature, pp. 101-102.
2. Calcutta Review, vol. XCV, 1892, p. 202.

illustrated in the Bengali literature, perhaps most strikingly in the literature on the cult of the Satya-Pīr. The origin of the Satya-Pīr cult is not definitely known, though it admits of little doubt that it arose out of the extreme reverence given to the pīrs by both the Muslims and the Hindus. People of both the communities worshipped the Satya-Pīr (or Satya-Nārāyana as he was called by the Hindus). The poetical work Satya-Nārāyana of Rāmeśwar Bhaṭṭāchārya who probably wrote during the time of Murshid Qulī Khān contains such verses as the following: "After this I shall worship Raḥīm and Rāma." "Rāma and Raḥīm are two names of the Lord." "In Mecca, He is Raḥīm and in Ayodhyā He is Rāma."[1] The Hindus visited the shrines of the Muslim saints like Ismā'īl Ghāzī of Mandaran, Ẓafar Khān Ghāzī of Triveni and Baṛa Khān Ghāzī of Risibati,[2] while the Muslims are found attending the Hindu festivals.[3] It may thus be suggested that the people of both the communities normally lived in harmony and cooperation both in the court and in the villages. An occasional estangement of relations, sparked off by some unhappy incident, was not, however, altogether absent. As an example, Salīm

1. Rāmeśwar Bhaṭṭāchārya: Satya-Nārāyana, edited by N.N.Gupta p. II.
2. C.f. T.K. Raychaudhuri: Opcit., p. 140.
3. For example, Prince Aẓīm al-Shān attended the Holi festival. (T.B., f.24b). Many other examples of the nawābs and the nobles taking part in the Hindu festivals are available. See Siyar, III, pp. 144-46. See also K.K. Datta: Alivardi and His Times, pp. 257-58.

Allāh's narrative of the execution of Bṛindāban by Qāḍī Muḥammad Sharaf on a charge of maltreating a Muslim faqīr may be cited. Though Bṛindāban had ill-treated the faqīr under sufficient provocation, even Murshid Qulī Khān's entreaties and Prince ʿAẓīm al-Shān's interference could not spare Bṛindāban his life.[1] Again Sayyid Ghulām Ḥusain relates that there was an uprising among the Muslims of Patna against a Hindu officer named Abhirām of Bhagalpur, the representative of the absentee faujdār ʿAṭāʾ Allāh Khān. The hand of a Muslim inhabitant of Bhagalpur was cut off by order of the Hindu officer (Abhirām), because the Muslim had killed a consecrated bull. Having found no remedy at Bhagalpur, the victim went to Patna, but there also he got no relief. Shāh Jaʿfarī, a learned Muslim divine of Patna was shocked at this injustice and himself took up the cause of the injured man. There was a very great uprising among the people. It was only after ʿAṭāʾ Allāh Khān had pacified the victim with an indemnity and gift and with promise of punishing those who had maimed him that the uprising subsided.[2] Such instances of estrangement, however, were few and far between. It seems that in general, the people of both the communities lived in peace and harmony.

---

1. Supra, pp. 117-118.
2. Siyar, II, pp. 173-77.

Social stagnation

It has been seen that Murshid Qulī Khān secured for Bengal a long, and for the period, exceptional spell of peace. He restored administrative efficiency, placing the revenue system on a sound footing, maintaining a firm control over both Mughal officials and European merchants. The external trade of the province notably expanded. Within the conventional limits of Muslim ideals he set a personal example of sober piety. Yet it is impossible not to feel that in this period there was a certain stagnation in the society of Bengal. As has been seen, with the decline of the Mughal empire, the flow of Mughal officers from the heart of the empire to Bengal and Orissa virtually stopped.[1] Beyond the Teliagarhi narrows, Bengal moved into a provincial isolation from the artistic or religious life of Mughal India. With the growth of authority in a single hand, the ambitions of officials became focussed more narrowly upon Murshid Qulī Khān and his relatives. The hereditary element in office holding likewise increased. The circle of talent from which the choice of officers could be made shrank. It has been argued by Jadunath Sarkar,[2] it is true, that Murshid Qulī Khān created a new class of zamīndārs or collectors, dispossessing the old Hindu

1. Supra, p. 339. See also H.B.II, p. 410
2. H.B.II, p. 409.

aristocracy and were this proved then it could be argued that a new social class was created by his action. But in the absence of any list of old zamīndārs dispossessed and new ones created such a development must remain supposition. The only name which does crop up again and again is that of Rāmjīvan -- but the fortunes of one man do not permit an argument about the fate of a class.

The isolation of Bengal and administrative vigour of Murshid Qulī Khān ensured two decades of peace. But even this was perhaps no unmixed blessing, for it led to a slackening of military efficiency. No notable general or military organiser appeared in Bengal and Orissa at this time. The description given by the English observer[1] of Mīr Abū Ṭālib's confliot with Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān, of his ill-managed camp and undisciplined soldiers and of the conspicuous part that the European mercenary soldiers and gunners therefore played, indicate how far military efficiency had already declined. In the next thirty years the Mahrattas and English were to exploit the weakness to the full.

The other weakness, ultimately no less fatal to the cause of Bengal's independence, was the venality of government officials. Murshid Qulī Khān may have curbed

---

1. Orme MS India, vol. IX, p. 2165.

the private trading of his officials,[1] but he certainly failed to curb their corruption. The Consultations bear ample testimony to the fact that important government officers in Hugli including the faujdār accepted presents from the Company.[2] In the Mughal system, the practice of making gifts to officers was quite legal, but the way in which the Hugli officers hankered after presents and pressed the Company for presents, shows that they were demanding the sum as a matter of right. The judicial officers, qādī and muftī were no exception. The practice must have given rise to much neglect of public duty, occasioned by the receipt or non-receipt of presents. It was mainly the greed for presents, which was responsible for so many "affronts"and "abuses" that we often hear in the English records.

---

1. Supra, pp. 337-338.
2. C.f. Consultations, 10th January, 1704; 2nd October, 1704.

CONCLUSION

Murshid Qulī Khān was the central figure in Bengal and Orissa during the first quarter of the 18th century. From an abscure origin, he rose to first one and then another important position and ultimately became the highest officer in Bengal and Orissa. This was largely due to his vigorous character and his efficient management of business.

Murshid Qulī Khān maintained peace in the provinces even during the wars of succession and the palace revolutions organised by powerful ministers in Delhi. A few rebels and robbers did appear during his time and he had to face the opposition of the powerful officer, Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khān, but Murshid Qulī Khān suppressed them all and did not long allow either turbulent zamīndārs or robber chiefs to raise their head or to carry on depredations in the country.

An important feature in Murshid Qulī Khān's career was his unfailing loyalty to the imperial court and to whichever Timurid prince came to the throne of Delhi. Loyalty drew him into collision with two royal princes, ʿAẓīm al-Shān and Farrukh Siyar. The first was

able to influence the emperor to remove Murshid Qulī Khān from his posts in Bengal and Orissa and the second actually sent several forces against Murshid Qulī Khān with a view to crushing him. But on both occasions, Murshid Qulī Khān survived and survived honourably with eventual reinstatement in his position and further promotion. Paradoxical, though it may seem, the reason may be found in his loyalty to the reigning emperor, his maintenance of peace in the provinces, his efficient administration and finally his regular despatch of imperial revenues.

Murshid Qulī Khān witnessed the gradual decline of the Mughal empire. Probably he realised that the central government of the Mughals was at a low ebb and that the provinces would break away from the centre sooner or later, and it may have been this consciousness of impending change that led him to centralise the administration of the provinces in his own hands. That he did not break away from the centre testifies to the fact that the centralisation was meant to strengthen the administration rather than from any ill-motive.

Another important act of Murshid Quli Khan was his revenue reforms. He surveyed the lands and fixed the revenues of the rayats after determining the capacity of the husbandmen to pay. There may be doubt about the extent

or detailed thoroughness of his survey, but there is no room for doubt that he did resettle the revenues and that he was conscious of the need of an equitable assessment. It deserves notice, particularly because he settled the revenues at a time when the Mughal empire was fast declining and all higher officers of the centre were looking to their own aggrandisement rather than the well-being of the empire, not to speak of that of the people. His survey of the land's capacity and his agricultural loans to the poor cultivators were aimed at ameliorating the distress of the people and at the same time collecting the revenues in time. His vigilance to maintain the standard price of grain is commendable, as yet another example of enlightened, because long-sighted self-interest.

Murshid Qulī Khān also realised the importance of trade and commerce in the country's economy. His attitude to the foreign companies is best illustrated by the words, "he did not care what nation they were so they did but bring money", reported reply to the English when the latter had complained against the Ostenders. Though he was well-disposed to trade and commerce, he was positively against permitting the foreign companies to gain such powers as would jeopardise the country's interest.

Murshid Qulī Khān did not play any conspicuous part in the social life of the people. His interest was confined to the encouragement of Muslim learning and to participation in Muslim festivals. But his maintenance of peace and such other measures as the transfer of the capital, stopping the private trade of the government officers, the establishment of thānas and his prevention of extortion from the traders were of great importance. They resulted in the growth of production, expansion of trade and the increase of exports. The receipt of sufficient bullion for the tribute to Delhi and internal trade of Bengal from the foreigners due to increased export was an important factor in the economy of the country.

In studying the life of Murshid Qulī Khān and in portraying the major features of his administration the attempt has been made to correct the factual errors or misinterpretations of earlier scholars by a fuller use of the sources. They critisised Murshid Qulī Khān mainly on the grounds that he introduced a system of farming the lands to increase the imperial revenues, that he dispossessed the old hereditary zamīndārs to replace them by a class of farmers, that he harassed the foreign traders and from time to time stopped their business to extort money for

his personal gain, that he inflicted barbarous punishment upon the defaulting zamīndārs and collectors and that he appointed so many Bengali Hindus as collectors of revenues only to find pretext to convert them to Islam, taking advantage of their default. Such criticisms seem either due to their depending on a limited range of sources or because the sources were not read as closely as they deserve. As has been pointed out, none of the accusations made against Murshid Quli Khan stand the test of investigation.

It has been seen that Murshid Qulī Khān did not make a drastic change in the revenue system. What he did was to make a survey, possibly limited in extent, and to curtail the expenditure in the collection of revenues by allowing the zamīndārs only a subsistence allowance (nānkar). He maintained the system of collecting revenues both by the zamīndārs and collectors. The increase of revenues in the settlement of Murshid Qulī Khān was only 13½% over and above the settlement of Shāh Shujā' made over half a century earlier and the increase may well be attributed to the extension of cultivation in the intervening period.

That Murshid Qulī Khān stopped the business of

foreign companies from time to time has also been found untrue. That he was favourably disposed to trade is borne out both by Salīm Allāh and the English records. As a civil servant he studied closely the implications attending the granting of sanads to the foreign companies and did not let any occasion slip to collect money for the emperor in exchange for the privileges granted to them, but there is no valid ground to accuse Murshid Qulī Khān of stopping the trade unnecessarily or for private gain. The English records reveal extortion only once in 1726, but not by stopping their business, and that on the grounds of the English abuse of their power of issuing dastaks and demanding dues on the Calcutta towns. The figures of the increased exports of the English nullify the suggestion that their business suffered by being repeatedly stopped at the sweet will of the nawāb.

The allegation about Murshid Qulī Khān's inflicting barbarous punishment on the revenue defaulters is based on Salīm Allāh. Salīm Allāh cites the example of the punishment of Kinkar Sen and Darpa Nārāyan Qānūngo, but it has been seen that neither of them stand the test of investigation. Previous scholars have not paid sufficient attention to the source of strength that kept Murshid Qulī Khān

in power. He had no support in the imperial court and belonged to no party in the capital. His strength should be attributed only to his efficiency and regular despatch of the imperial revenues. The revenues came from the rāyats and the increased commerce and the efficiency of administration was due to the loyal service of both the Hindu and Muslim officers under him. If he had made the rāyats suffer by his farming system and had extorted money from the traders or even if he had oppressed his subordinate officers and found pretext to convert the Hindus to Islam, it would be difficult to understand how he could have maintained his own power. Indeed, had he committed the follies with which he has been charged he would have killed the hen that laid the golden eggs for him.

Jadunath Sarkar is prepared to call Murshid Qulī Khān "a glorified civil servant only, a masterly collector and accountant, a brainy departmental head, but no statesmanlike leader possessed of vision", because, "he did nothing to give permanence to his system, he created no efficient civil service, no council of notables to serve as a check on the caprice of tyrants and preserve the balance of the state in evil days to come. Above all, his one absorbing passion for filling the state coffers made him neglect the national defence and cut down the regular internal security force of Bengal to 2000 cavalry and 4000 infantry."[1]

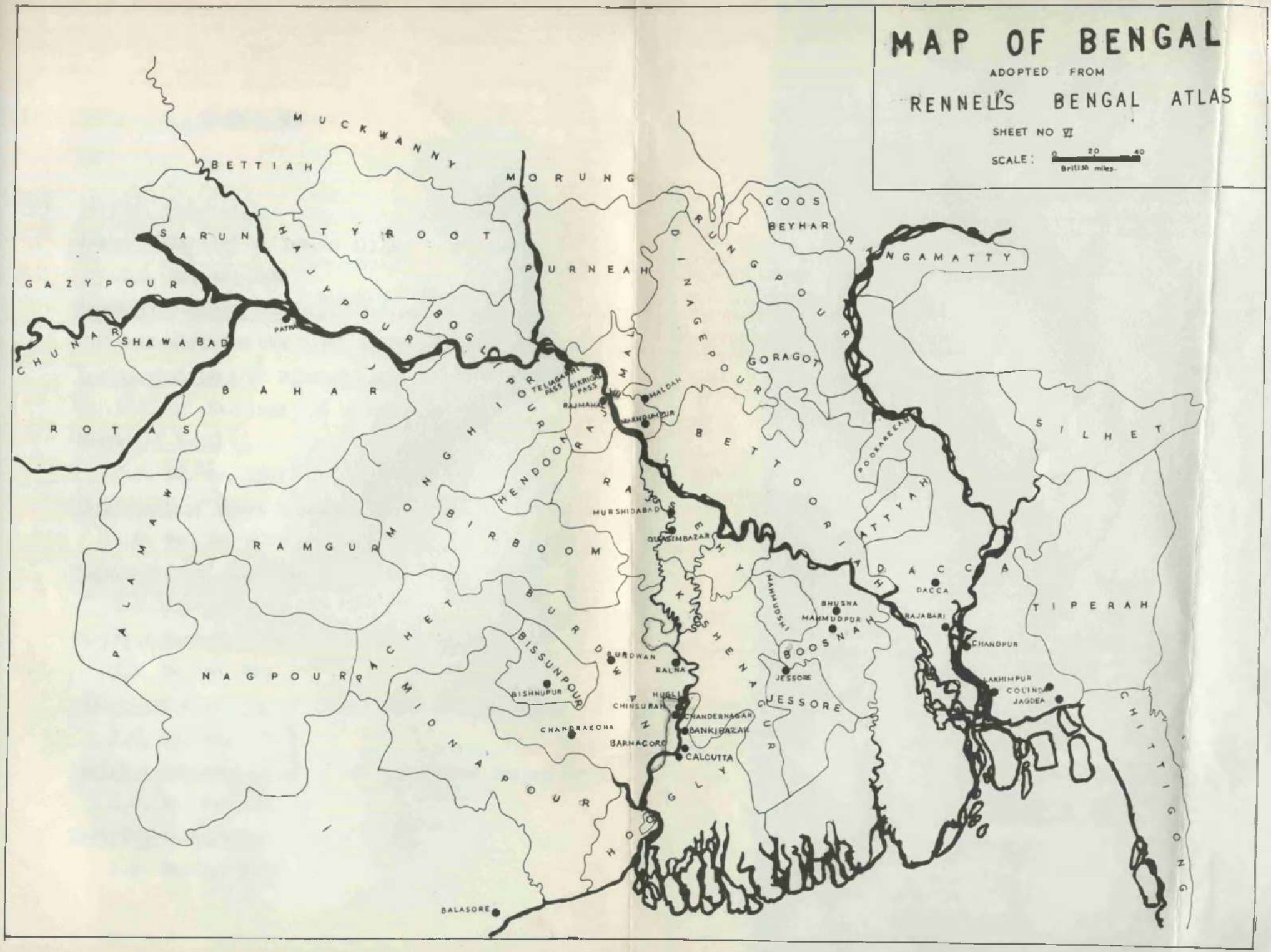
1. H.B. II, p. 398.

It is difficult to accept the implications of Sarkar's allegations. While pronouncing a judgment one has to remember the time and circumstances under which Murshid Qulī Khān carried on his administration. His success and failure have to be judged within the framework of Mughal administration, because to the last day of his life he remained loyal to the Mughal government. He therefore could not have done anything not provided by the Mughal administrative system. The question of creating a council of notables could not arise. As for the civil service, we cannot expect a civil service in the early 18th century Bengal on modern lines. An analysis of Murshid Qulī Khān's administration shows that he organised the civil servants within the Mughal administrative system and in the best way understood in his time. They worked efficiently not only in his own time but as long as his policies were followed by his successors. The new class of officers counter-balanced the new moneyed class that grew up round the foreign settlements. It is when this class was alienated and the balance was broken that the country faced real danger and lost her freedom. It is not clear what Sarkar means by "regular internal security force of Bengal". The Mughal system required the mansabdārs to maintain their own troops. Murshid Qulī Khān was a mansabdār of 7000 and

other officers, dīwān, faujdār also held appropriate ranks. The question of cutting down the regular internal security force does not arise. The Mughal empire was at a low ebb and the maintenance of troops became a general problem in the 18th century. Even the great nobles of the empire discontinued the keeping of as many troopers as their mansab required them to do.[1] Moreover, Murshid Qulī Khān did successfully maintain peace within the provinces with the number of soldiers available, and did so against both internal and external foes. We cannot expect from a provincial officer a superior statesmanship such as would have safeguarded not only Bengal but the empire as a whole. If the empire was in a process of disintegration it was because the emperor and the imperial ministers were utterly devoid of statesmanship.

---

1. Satish Chandra: Op.cit., pp. XLIII-XLVII.


MAP OF BENGAL
ADOPTED FROM
RENNELL'S BENGAL ATLAS
SHEET NO VI
SCALE: 0 20 40
British miles.
MUCKWANNY
BETTIAH
SARUN
GAZYPOUR
CHUNAR
SHAWABAD
PATNA
ITTYROOT
BOGLIPOUR
MORUNG
PURNEAH
COOS BEYHAR
RUNGPOUR
DINAGEPOUR
RUNGAMATTY
GORAGOT
BAHAR
ROTAS
TELIAGARI PASS
SIRIGALI PASS
RAJMAHAL
MALDAH
MONGHIPOUR
HENDOORAH
RAMGUR
BIRBOOM
MURSHIDABAD
CUSSIMBAZAR
BETTOORIA
BOOSAREEAH
ATTYAH
SILHET
PALAMAW
NAGPOUR
PACHETT
BISSUNPOUR
BISHNUPUR
BURDWAN
KALNA
HUGLI
CHINSURAH
CHANDERNAGAR
BANKIBAZAR
CHANDRAKONA
BARNACORE
CALCUTTA
HOOGLY
JESSORE
BOOSNAH
MAHMUDSHI
BHUSNA MAHMUDPUR
DACCA
RAJABARI
CHANDPUR
LAKHIMPUR
COLINDA
JAGDEA
TIPERAH
CHITTIGONG
BALASORE

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(i) Persian manuscripts: -

Ahkām-i-ʿĀlamgirī of ʿInāyat Allāh,

I.O. Ms. No. 3887

Akhbārāt-i-Darbār-i-Muʿalla, Jaipur records,

Collection of the Royal Asiatic Society, London

Bahādurshāhnāmah of Niʿmat Khān,

I.O. Ms. No. 1942

Dastūr al-ʿAmal,

I.O. Ms. No. 1387

ʿIbratnāmah of Mirzā Muḥammad,

I.O. Ms. No. 50

Tadhkirāt-i-Salātīn-i-Chaghtāi of Kāmwar Khān,

I.O. Ms. No. 3151

Tārīkh-i-Farrukh Siyar of anonymous writer,

I.O. Ms. No. 252

Tārīkh-i-Irādat Khān of Irādat Khān Mubārak Allāh,

I.O. Ms. No. 3925

Tārīkh-i-Muḥammad Shāhī of Mirzā Muḥammad Bakhsh Āshūb,

I.O. Ms. No. 250

Tawārīkh-i-Bangālah of Salīm Allāh,

I.O. Ms. No. 2995

(ii) Printed Persian books: -

Abū'l-Faḍl: Āʾin-i-Akbarī,

Bibliotheca Indica, 1877
translated by H. Blochmann &
H.S. Jarrett, 1873-1894

Akbarnāmah,

Bibliotheca Indica, 1886
translated by H. Beveridge, 1902

ʿAlī Muḥammad Khān: Mirʾāt-i-Ahmadī,

Baroda, 1927-30

Ghulām Ḥusain Salīm: Riāḍ al-Salāṭīn,

Bibliotheca Indica, 1898
translated by Abdus Salam
Calcutta, 1904

Ghulām Ḥusain Ṭabaṭābaʾī: Siyar al-Mutākhkherīn,

translated by Haji Mustapha
Calcutta, 1926

Khāfī Khān: Muntakhab al-Lubāb,

Bibliotheca Indica, 1869-1925

Minhāj-i-Sirāj: Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī,

Bibliotheca Indica, 1864

Mīr-i-ʿĀlam: Ḥadīqat al-ʿĀlam,

Hyderabad, 1850

Nuṣrat Jang: Tārīkh-i-Nusratjangī,

edited by Harinath De in
Memoirs of the Asiatic Society
of Bengal, vol. II, No. 6.

Sāqī Mustad Khān: Mā'thir-i-'Ālamgīrī,

Bibliotheca Indica, 1873
translated by Jadunath Sarkar
Calcutta, 1947

Shāh Nawāz Khān & others: Mā'thir al-Umarā,

Bibliotheca Indica, 1888-1891
translated by H. Beveridge & Baini Prashad, Calcutta, 1911, 1952.

(iii) Bengali books: -

Bhārat Chandra: Bhārat Chandra Granthāvalī,

edited by Brajendra Nāth Bandopādhyāy & Sajanikānta Dās
Calcutta, 1357 B.S.

Bhaṭṭāchārya, Rāmeswar: Śivāyana

edited by Yugilāl Hāldār
Calcutta, 1957

Satya-Nārāyana/ pamphlet 7,

edited by Nagendra Nāth Gupta

Bhaṭṭāchārya, Śivaprasād: Bhārat Chandra O Rāmprasād,

Calcutta, 1956

Bṛindāban Dās Chaitanya Bhāgabata,

3rd edition, Chaitanya era, 452

Haq, Enamul: Muslim Bāṅgālā Sāhitya,

Dacca, 1955

Haq, Enamul & Karim, Abdul: Arākān Rājsabhāya Bāṅgālā Sāhitya,

Caloutta, 1935

Mitra, Satish Chandra: Jaśore-Khulnār Itihāsa, part II
Calcutta, 1329 B.S.

Mukunda Rām: Kavikaṅkan Chandī,
edited by Dinesh Chandra Sen & Basanta Rañjan Rāi
Calcutta, 1924-26

Sen, Dinesh Chandra: Baṅga Bhāshā O Sāhitya,
8th edition, Calcutta, 1356 B.S.

Sen, Lālā Jai Nārāyan: Harilīlā,
edited by Dinesh Chandra Sen & Basanta Rañjan Rāi
Calcutta, 1927

Sen, Rāmprasād: Vidyā Sundara,
Calcutta, 1313 B.S.

Sen, Sukumār: Bāṅgālā Sāhityer Itihāsa,
Calcutta, 1940

Islāmī Bāṅgālā Sāhitya,
Vardhamāna, 1358 B.S.

(iv) Manuscript records of the European companies: -

(a) At the India Office

Abstract of letters from "Coast" and "Bay", vols. I&II

vol. I - 18th May, 1703 - 13th May, 1715
vol. 2 - 20th June, 1715 - 28th January, 1728

Bengal Public Consultations, Range I, vols. I-VI

Vol. I - 29th July, 1704, - 28th November, 1709
vol. II - 1st December, 1709-10th January, 1715
vol. III - 14th January, 1715- 8th December, 1718
vol. IV - 15th December, 1718- 22nd January, 1722

vol. V - 4th January, 1722 - 31st December, 1724
vol. VI - 4th January, 1725 - 15th January, 1729

Home Miscellaneous Series, vols. 47, 68-71, 456F, 628-630, 764

Letters (Home) sent by the Court to India, vols.1-6

vol. 1 - 13th January, 1703 - 18th March, 1708
vol. 2 - 24th March, 1708 - 23rd November,1710
vol. 3 - 9th November, 1710 - 7th October, 1713
vol. 4 - 23rd January, 1713 - 18th December,1717
vol. 5 - 20th December, 1717 - 31st March, 1722
vol. 6 - 5th April, 1722 - March, 1730

Letters received from Bengal, vols. I & IV

vol. I - 3rd January, 1709 - 9th February,1742 (incomplete)
vol. IV - 26th August, 1758 - 7th March, 1760

Orme MSS., India, vols. I, VI, IX

(b) At the British Museum

Persian copies with English translations of Firmans and Sunnuds granted to the Dutch Company,

B.M. MS. No. Addl. 29095

/In quoting from the records, the original spelling has been maintained, but the capital letters indiscriminately used in the records have been retained only where found necessary./

(v) Documentary printed works: -

Fawcett, C. ed.: The English Factories in India,

New Series 1670-1677
2 vols., Oxford, 1936, 1952

Firminger, W.K. ed.: The Fifth Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of the East India Company, 1812, 3 vols., Calcutta, 1917

Foster, W. ed.: The English Factories in India, 1618-1669, 13 vols., Oxford, 1906-1927

Heeres, J.E. ed.: Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlando-Indicum, vol. III, 1676-1691, The Hague, 1934

Hill, S.C.: Bengal in 1756-57, 3 vols., London, 1905

Martineau, A. ed.: Lettres et Conventions, Pondichery, 1911-1914

Stapel, F.W. ed.: Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlando-Indicum, vol. IV, 1691-1725, The Hague, 1935

Temple, R.C. ed.: The Diaries of Streynsham Master, 2 vols., London, 1911

The Sixth Report = Reports from the Select Committee appointed to take into consideration the state of the administration of justice in the province of Bengal, 1783, ..., Reports VI - IX, I.O. collection No. 15; Parliamentary branch.

Wilson, C.R.: Early Annals of the English in Bengal, 3 vols. in 4 parts
Calcutta, 1895-1917
Old Fort William in Bengal, 2 vols.
London, 1906

Yule, H. ed.: The Diary of William Hedges, 3 vols.
London, 1887-1889

(vi) Printed books in the European languages: -

Ahmad, Shamsuddin: A Supplement to vol. III of the Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta,
Delhi, 1939

Ascoli, F.D.: Early Revenue History of Bengal and the Fifth Report,
Oxford, 1917

Bal Krishna: Commercial Relations between India and England,
London, 1924

Banerji, R.D. History of Orissa, vol. II
Calcutta, 1931

Barbosa, D.: The Book of Duarte Barbosa, vol. II
translated by M.L. Dames,
London, 1921

Bengal District Gazetteers,
Calcutta, 1906-1923

Bernier, F.: Travels in the Mogul Empire,
edited by Archibald Constable, Westminster, 1891

Bhattacharya, Sukumar: East India Company and the Economy of Bengal 1704-1740,
London, 1954

Bolts, W.: Considerations on Indian Affairs,
London, 1772-1775

Bowrey, T.: Countries Round the Bay of Bengal,
edited by R.C. Temple
Cambridge, 1905

Bruce, J.: Annals of the Honorable East India Company from their Establishment by the Charter of Queen Elizabeth, 1600, To the Union of the London and English East-India Companies, 1707-1708, vol. III
London, 1810

Campos, J.J.A.: History of the Portuguese in Bengal,
Calcutta and London, 1919

Colebrooke, H.T. & Lambert, A.: Remarks on the present state and husbandry of Bengal,
Calcutta, 1795

Craufurd, R.: Sketches Chiefly Relating to the History, Religion, Learning and Manners of the Hindus,
London, 1790

Dani, Ahmad Hasan: Dacca,
Dacca, 1956
Muslim Architecture in Bengal,
Dacca, 1961

Das, Harihar: The Norris Embassy to Aurangzib, 1699-1702,
condensed and rearranged by S.C. Sarkar
Calcutta, 1959

Das Gupta, J.N.: Bengal in the 16th Century,
Calcutta University, 1914
India in the 17th Century,
Calcutta University, 1916

Datta, Kali Kinkar: Studies in the History of the Bengal Subah, 1740-1770,
Calcutta, 1936
Alivardi and His Times,
Calcutta, 1939
The Dutch in Bengal and Bihar, 1740-1825,
Patna, 1948

Day, C.: History of Commerce,
London, 1909

Dodwell, H.H., ed.: The Cambridge History of India, vol. V,
Cambridge, 1929

Dow, A.: The History of Hindostan, vol. III, London, 1812

Dutt, Ramesh: The Economic History of British India, London, 1902

Eastern Bengal District Gazetteers, Calcutta, 1908-1912

Fuzli Rubbee, Khondker: The Origin of the Musulmans of Bengal, Calcutta, 1895

Gladwin, F.: A Narrative of the Transactions in Bengal, during the Soobahdaries of Azeem-us-Shan, Jaffer Khan, Shuja Khan, Sirafraz Khan and Alyvirdy Khan, London, 1788
/ summary translation of Tawārīkh-ī-Bangālah of Salīm Allāh /

Glamann, K.: Dutch-Asiatic Trade 1620-1740, Copenhagen, 1958

Grant, J.: An Inquiry into the Nature of Zemindary tenures in the Landed Property of Bengal, London, 1791

Analysis of the Finances of Bengal, published as Appendix 4 in the Fifth Report, vol. II edited by W.K. Firminger Calcutta, 1917

Grose, T.: Voyage to the East Indies, 2 vols. London, 1772

Guyon, A.: Histoire des Indes Orientales anciennes et modernes, 3 vols. Paris, 1744

Haig, W. & Burn, R.: The Cambridge History of India, vol. IV, Cambridge, 1937

Hakluyt, R.: Principal Navigations and Voyages, London, 1809

Hamilton, A.: A New Account of the East Indies, 2 vols. edited by W. Foster London, 1930

Hamilton, E.J.: The Trade Relations between England and India, 1600-1896, Calcutta, 1919

Haq, Enamul: Muslim Bengali Literature, Pakistan Publications, Karachi, 1957

Harris, J.: Navigantium atque Itinerantium Bibliothica, or A Complete Collection of Voyages and Travels, 2 vols. London, 1705

Harvey, G.E.: History of Burma, London, 1925

Hodges, W.: Travels in India 1780-1783, 2nd edition, London, 1794

Hollister, J.N.: The Shi'a of India,
London, 1953

Hunter, W.W.: Orissa, vol. II
London, 1872

A Statistical Account of Bengal, vol. IX
London, 1877

Annals of Rural Bengal,
7th edition, London, 1897

Irvine, W.: The Army of the Indian Mughals,
Calcutta, 1903

The Later Mughals, 2 vols.
Calcutta & London, 1922

Jaffar, S.M.: Education in Muslim India,
Peshawar, 1936

Some Cultural Aspects of Muslim Rule in India,
Peshawar, 1938

Karim, Abdul Social History of the Muslims in Bengal (down to A.D. 1538)
Dacca, 1959

Keay, F.E.: Indian Education in Ancient and Later Times,
Oxford University Press, 1938

Khan, Shafaat Ahmad: The East India Trade in the Seventeenth Century in Political and Economic Aspects,
London, 1923

Khan, Shafaat Ahmad ed.: John Marshall in India,
Oxford University Press, 1927

Lane-Poole, S.: The Coins of the Mughal Emperors of Hindustan in the British Museum,
London, 1892

Law, Narendra Nath: Promotion of Learning in India during Muhammadan rule by Muhammadans,
London, 1916

Studies in Indian History and Culture
London, 1925

Long, J.: Adam's Reports on Vernacular Education in Bengal and Bihar, 1835-1838,
Calcutta, 1868

Selections from the Unpublished Records of Government from 1748-1767 inclusive,
Calcutta, 1869

Malleson, G.B.: History of the French in India,
London, 1868

Manucci, N.: Storia Do Mogor, 4 vols.
translated by W. Irvine
London 1906-1908

Marshman, J.C.: An Outline of the History of Bengal, 5th edition, Serampore, 1844

Martin, R.M.: The History, Antiquities, Topography and Statistics of Eastern India, 3vols. London, 1838

Milburn, W.: Oriental Commerce, 2 vols. London, 1858

Moreland, W.H.: India At the Death of Akbar, London, 1920

From Akbar to Aurangzeb, London, 1923

Agrarian System of Moslem India, Cambridge, 1929

Orme, R.: History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan, London, 1803

Historical Fragments of the Mogul Empire, London, 1805

Phayre, A.P.: History of Burma, London, 1884

Qureshi, Ishtiaq Husain: Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi, 2nd edition, Lahore, 1944

Raychaudhuri, Tapankumar: Bengal under Akbar and Jahangir,
Calcutta, 1953

Ramsbotham, R.B.: Studies in the Land-Revenue History of Bengal 1769-1787,
Oxford University Press, 1926

Raynal, Abbe: A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade in the East and West Indies, 5 vols.,
translated by J. Justamond, 1777

Rennell, J.: A Bengal Atlas,
London, 1780

Memoir of the Map of Hindoostan,
London, 1788

Risley, H.H.: The Tribes and Castes of Bengal, 2 vols.,
Calcutta, 1891

Rouse, B.: Dissertation concerning the Landed Property of Bengal,
London, 1791

Saran, Paramatma: The Provincial Government of the Mughals 1526-1658,
Allahabad, 1941

Sarkar, Jadunath: India of Aurangzib (Topography, Statistics and Roads) Compared with the India of Akbar, with extracts

of Khulasatu-t-Tawarikh and the Chahar Gulshan,
translated and annotated, Calcutta, 1901

Studies in Mughal India,
Calcutta, 1919

History of Aurangzib, 5 vols.
Calcutta, 1912-1924

Mughal Administration,
2nd edition, Calcutta, 1924

Anecdotes of Aurangzib,
Calcutta, 1925

Studies in Aurangzib's reign,
Calcutta, 1933

History of Bengal, vol. II,
edited by J.N. Sarkar and published by Dacca University, 1948

Bengal Nawabs,
Calcutta, 1952

Satish Chandra: Parties and Politics in the Mughal Empire 1707-1740,
Aligarh, 1959

Scott, J.: A Translation of the Memoirs of Eradut Khan,
London, 1786

Scrafton, L.: Reflections on the Government of Indostan,

London, 1763

Sen, Dinesh Chandra: History of the Bengali Language and Literature,

Calcutta University, 1911

Sen, Surendra Nath; ed.: Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri,

Delhi, 1949

Sharif, Ahmad: A Descriptive Catalogue of Bengali Manuscripts in Munshi Abdul Karim's Collection, by Munshi Abdul Karim and Ahmad Sharif,

English translation with an introduction by S.S. Husain,
Dacca, 1960

Sinha, Jogish Chandra: Economic Annals of Bengal,

London, 1927

Sinha, Narendra Krishna: Economic History of Bengal from Plassey to Permanent Settlement, vol. I,

Calcutta, 1956

Sinha, Narendra Krishna & others: Selections from District Records: Midnapure Salt Papers: Hijli and Tamluk (1781-1807),

Calcutta, 1954

Spear, T.G.P.: The Nabobs (A study of the social life of the English in Eighteenth century India)

London, 1932

Stavorinus, J.S.: Voyages to the East Indies, 3 vols. London, 1798

Steuart, J.: Principles of Money applied to the Present State of the Coin in Bengal, London, 1772

Stewart, C.: History of Bengal from the First Mohammedan Invasion until the Virtual Conquest of Bengal by the English in 1757, London, 1813

Taylor, J.: A Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca, Calcutta, 1850

Tavernier, J.B.: Travels in India, 2 vols., edited by V. Ball, Londin, 1889

Thomas, E.: Revenue Resources of the Mughal Empire in India, London, 1871

Titus, M.T.: Indian Islam, Oxford University Press, 1930

Vansittart, H.: A Narrative of the Transactions in Bengal, 3 vols., London, 1766

Verelst, H.: A View of the Rise and Progress of the Present State of the English Government in Bengal, London, 1772

Walsh, Major: A History of Murshidabad District, London, 1902

Westland, J.: A Report on the district of Jessore, its antiquities, its history, its commerce, 2nd edition, Calcutta, 1874

Wheeler, J.T.: Madras in Olden Times, 2 vols., Madras, 1861

Wilson, H.H.: Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms, London, 1855

Yule, H. & Burnell, A.C.: Hobson-Jobson, London, 1903

Journals

[Volumes have been specified in the footnotes]

Bengal: Past & Present, Calcutta

Calcutta Review, Calcutta

Indian Historical Quarterly, Calcutta

Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta

Journal of the Panjab Historical Society, Lahore

Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, London

Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission

Visva-Bharati Annals, Visva-Bharati